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ABSTRACT

This report presents six papers resulting from a symposium held June 28, 1977, to debate the validity of three assumptions on education-and-work programs, particularly in relation to youth employment. Question 1, "Who should say what a child should prepare for: the child or the community?", is answered by Peter Schrag and Margaret Fallers, both of whom agree that adult intervention is necessary but disagree on the methods to be used. Question 2, "Can we predict which skills will be saleable?", is responded to by Garth L. Mangum and C. Arnold Anderson. Mangum says, given that U.S. occupational structure is fairly stable, we should concentrate on developing criteria for determining individual skills and look closely at the important issues of career education. Anderson states that because the job possibilities for students cannot be forecasted reliably, appropriate preparatory classes cannot be specified in more than general terms. The third issue, "Collaboration between education, labor, and business--is there sufficient impetus?", is discussed by Willard Wirtz and David K. Cohen. Their papers examine (1) the effects of unemployment and underemployment: (2) the transition from youth to adult: (3) the applicability of foreign education and work strategies to the United States; and (4) the collaboration efforts to date of schools, labor, and business. The last paper, by Steven P. Heynemann, summarizes the debates on the three issues. (ELG)

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SIX VIEWS ON THREE ISSUES RELATED TO EDUCATION AND WORK

Report of a Symposium in
Debate Form Held June 1977

Sponsored by the

Federal Interagency Panel for
Research on Adolescence

Stephen P. Heyneman, Editor

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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On June 28, 1977 a discussion in the form of a debate was held on the validity of three assumptions central to education-and-work programs. The debate was sponsored by the National Institute of Education and by the Federal Interagency Panel for Research on Adolescence as part of a larger examination of the school-to-work transition, particularly in relation to youth employment.

The notion of a debate around assumptions was an experiment. Would such a focus could help bring to bear the deepest knowledge and the best thinking on concepts reflected in programs underway throughout the country? Selecting three assumptions, which seemed like a good start, from among the possible was a task in which Stephen Heyneman then Executive Secretary of the Panel, Sam Phillips, then of the Institute and members of the Federal Interagency Panel for Research on Adolescents participated.

How well the experiment succeeded is uncertain. There was almost as much debate around the centrality of the assumptions to which education and work programs as around the assumptions themselves. Not everyone will agree with the arguments which the debaters felt most crucially addressed the issues nor satisfied with the extent to which the arguments are based on research evidence, in contrast to other forms of knowledge.

The papers and Stephen Heyneman's analysis of the discussion do represent, however, a status report as of June 1977 on what six very thoughtful people believed could be said with some certainty about three assumptions which evident in many, if not all, of the school-to-work transition programs. We hope that the intellectual excitement of the debate itself will come through these written words, and that the report of this experience will stimulate further examination of assumptions underlying education and work policy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction

Question 1: Who Should Say What a Child Should Prepare For: The Child or the Community? -------------- 1

Individual Free Choice -------------------------------------- 2

Informed? Free? Choice? ----------------------------------- 10

Question 2: Can We Predict Which Skills Will Be Saleable? --- 21

The Affirmative Case -- 22

Question 3: Collaboration Between Education, Labor and Business - Is There Sufficient Impetus? --------- 57

Assertions About Career Education --------------------------- 58

Career Education: A Solution To Whose Problem? ------------ 69

What We Learned --- 89

Question 1: Who Should Say What a Child Should Prepare For: The Child or the Community?

The question was stated to the participants as follows:

> Can the contention be supported that individual exercise of informed free choice of career direction will result in occupational choices that are consistent with the preferences of relevant social units (for example, parents of compulsory school age children, minority groups, communities, etc.)

INDIVIDUAL FREE CHOICE

Peter Schrag

If this question has any meaning at all, it can only be answered affirmatively. The more important issue is whether it has any meaning. Every phrase in the question is slippery: What are "relevant social units?" Who speaks for them? To what extent are their own "preferences" determinable and, if they are, can they ever be consistent with each other? Are the expressed preferences legitimate - that is, do those who express them have any standing as against the hypothetically opposed choices of individuals? More important still, how do the "preferences of relevant social units" square with what may be a higher (and also undefined) commitment to discipline, high standards of performance and the maintenance of cultural and ethical ideals and traditions which transcend individual choice as well as the "preferences of relevant social units?"

Obviously, "informed free choice" is limited. It is limited by economics, by technology, by the individual's own ability, by social and cultural influences, by the inherently un-neutral means by which information is provided, and by accident. I became a writer because my father was a writer, and because I was encouraged to write by friends and relatives and, at an early age, by a respected editor. Other people become electricians or bricklayers because some relative was able to get them an apprentice's slot in the appropriate union. In the sixties a great many people became teachers or community organizers or civil servants because of the fervent and perhaps chimerical idealism about education and social reform generated by the New Frontier and the Great Society and because the jobs were there. All this is only to state the obvious: that in any real world, jobs and careers are finally determined by the interplay of an almost infinite set of elements of which some are subject to the influence of policy decisions, but of which many are not. If any influence is effectively exercised, probably the most effective target is not the individual's choice but the technology, the social conditions, and the economy in which the choices are made. Government policy not only can (and does) create jobs; it can (and does) create whole professions. If more fellowships are available for the training of scientists or doctors, more people will become scientists or doctors. How that policy affects "free choice" is a matter of semantics, yet it is patently clear that when government subsidizes one form of education or training (e.g., public universities) far more than all others (e.g., apprenticeships or independent learning), then "free choice" is already skewed.

6

I don't think it takes much argument to demonstrate that "the preferences of relevant social units (parents, minority groups, communities)" are themselves internally ambiguous and externally inconsistent. Even if one assumed (for example) that the person who purports to speak for black people really does speak for them (a fact not in evidence and more susceptible to disproof than to proof) there is still no reason to assume that the claims and demands of any one group are consistent with those of another, and even less that any of them - or, indeed, all of them collectively - express the needs or wishes of the "community." What labor unions want for the children of their members may be the same as what spokesmen for minority groups want for theirs, but it may not necessarily be what the unions in every case want for the children of minorities. To the extent that it can be said that the wishes of each group for its children are consistent with what others want for their children, the whole proposition becomes a pious cliche: "We all want the best for our children." I happen to agree with the critics of career education that it was (and probably still is) another slogan for benign neglect; but if that is the case it is because career education, or any similar program imposed in an extraneous, superficial manner, has little to do with either "informed free choice" or with "the preferences of relevant social units." At best it is another excuse for educational failure, another trough for bureaucrats, or another "achievement" for politicians.

In the context of this discussion we're talking about fostering "informed free choice" through a program directed at people who are - roughly speaking - between six and eighteen years of age. The key phrase - elusive enough in any case - is even more difficult when it is applied to children. Clearly such choices cannot be exercised if the individual lacks the basic confidence and skills to make the decision; similarly, he or she cannot make the decision if he is isolated from "the preferences of relevant social units," from an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of skills and technology and from a variety of other elements and considerations. We have all seen fifteen and sixteen year olds going through vocational programs and shop courses which, even if they helped develop skills that were not technologically obsolete, led directly to the locked doors of a trade to which only the relatives of members were admitted. We are also seeing hundreds of thousands of people completing degrees in education, psychology, law, English, history, fine arts, and journalism who will not find the jobs that their teachers, parents and certain other "relevant social units" taught them to expect. The education itself may be totally appropriate - as liberal arts, as discipline, as education - but it may be largely irrelevant to the job market. Whether that situation reflects "informed free choice" or the "preferences of relevant social units" is a question better left to semantics and metaphysics.

To return to the question: in an open society neither side of the equation can have meaning without reference to the other; there can be nothing that is "informed" without taking account of a comprehensive situation that includes such considerations as the job market, equal opportunity laws and regulations, group aspirations, parental ambitions - and, often, parental restrictions - and the general condition of the economy. At the same time, in the first years of schooling, and perhaps through the first years of adolescence, neither the choices of individuals nor the preferences of social groups, however expressed, should have much bearing, if any, on the specific "career direction" that the individual is likely to follow. I don't intend here to reiterate the case against tracking or the follies of the self-fulfilling processes of intelligence tests, ability groupings and all the rest. The point here is that by definition, no choice can be "informed" if it is made prematurely - made, that is, before all the returns are in and before the individual is sufficiently mature properly to assess them, nor is there anything in the nature of learning that requires such early foreclosure. At the age of thirteen I was certain that I was going to be a scientist; at sixteen I was a novelist; at twenty-two a newspaper reporter. All those "careers" were consistent with the preferences of my parents.

At the heart of the controversy reflected by the question at hand the major concern is not directed to the fact of intervention in the choices of individuals (or its absence), but to the course that the intervention takes. Almost every form of education that is not totally auto-didactic involves some form of outside intervention - some expression of the "preferences of relevant social units;" we try to encourage, if not force, children to learn to read (for example), even though some of them would prefer to play kickball on the playground. We make them go to school because - in theory at least - we assume that six year olds are not always able to make "informed" choices. The trick is to be able to distinguish the choices which are informed from those which are not and, even more difficult, to honor them. The intervention succeeds where its own preferences and commitments - a teacher's passion for art or good writing or clean work - and his intelligence - comprehend and honor a pupil's curiosity, skills and commitment - where the style of one meshes with the style of the other - and where the interaction of the two enlarges the capacity to make informed free choices.

Most of the time, and nearly all the time in a child's first fourteen or fifteen years, those dynamics - this process of education - have little if any explicit relationship to "career direction" except in the most general terms. They will encourage one set of skills and interests more than another - to give them all equal weight is to give none of them any value - and they will obviously influence the general outlines of subsequent career direction. But who is to say whether a high level of verbal skill will produce a lawyer, a writer or a con man, or whether an unusual ability in visualizing spatial relations will lead to a career as a mechanic, a designer, a draftsman, a sculptor or an airplane pilot? A good many of us change careers a half dozen times, not because we were poorly counselled or because we made the wrong choices, but because there is no way to know what is right until one is more or less fully committed to something as an adult. The important thing about a real education is that it does not require the kind of foreclosure that will shut the individual out from anything for which his ability and his evolving interests might have qualified him.

If we have learned anything in the past generation, it is the fact that education almost always fails when it disregards the "preferences of relevant social units" in the name of individual free choice (the ultimate free school) or when it disregards individual choice for the sake of some rigid, external order - some agenda which makes all children, or all children of one class, or one age, or one sort of background, dependent variables in a pre-ordained system. To isolate the individual's free choice from "the preferences of relevant social units" is to make it, at best, uninformed and, more commonly, undisciplined and chaotic; to disregard the individual's choices and preferences is to practice indoctrination and foster stupidity. Both involve the irresponsible encouragement of irresponsibility. There is not much point or meaning in either without constant tension and interplay with the other.

The drawback of most schools is that they operate with only one of these two agendas (and sometimes, of course, with not even one); this is generally called the school's "philosophy." The problem, as I suggested earlier, with the controversy about "career education" or any other extraneous agenda, is that it is primarily a debate about whether one program of "social preferences" should replace another. Presumably the real issue is the quality of education, and that concerns the difficult interplay of the individual's agenda with those of the society, parents, minorities, and any other element with some claim to social legitimacy. Classicists quarrel with vocationalists, traditionalists with progressives, the advocates of free schools with the defenders of structure and discipline. Everyone has an agenda for the children, even if the agenda is purportedly only what the child wants for himself, but almost no one confronts the difficult problem of resolving the child's agenda with that of the program - of creating what is, in effect a third agenda - and it therefore hardly matters whether, on the one hand, the kid is stultified with pre-set academic routines, or bored with collages about horse doctors and beauticians, or, on the other, let loose in a hermetic child's-preference world which tries to isolate him from all external standards and demands.

Particularly in the early years the successful curriculum may observe few of the formal bounds that separate one field from another; the search has to be for connections - connections between worlds and between elements - and in that search the imaginative and the fanciful may well be more real and relevant than the prosaic and the commonplace. I don't know of anyone sensitive to children who would want to deprive a seven-year-old of a "career" as a space man, a dinosaur hunter, or a Homeric voyager; clearly the possibilities of learning valuable things connected with those professions are far greater than are the possibilities related to whatever it is a young child - perhaps even an adolescent - can understand about accountants, appliance dealers or assembly line workers. For most of the years of compulsory schooling - perhaps for all of them - there is no way that any individual can make a genuinely informed "free choice" about a career, nor is there any possible way that an instructional system, no matter how oriented, can provide realistic information about the boredom, the fatigue or the depersonalization of most industrial jobs or the pretentious stupidity of most college courses, nor can it describe with even rough precision just what the average lawyer does, or the average account executive, or the average salesman. We should know by now that to push someone into college is likely to be almost as destructive as to put artificial barriers in the way of a person who really wants to go. I can no more think of reasons to send people to college because they are black than to keep them out because they are black.

The informed choices that are made almost necessarily have to concern themselves with areas and styles of learning, with the things that interest an individual and those that do not, and with the ways that he or she pursues them. If the educational environment is really intelligent - if it is a real system of education, and not merely a closed program of training - the end result of those pursuits is highly unpredictable. The fourteen-year-old who learns to read engine manuals because he dreams of owning a hot car may end up as a driver at Daytona ten years later, but it is far more likely that he will be a mathematician, a systems analyst, an engineer, or an auto mechanic. In this context the argument that children lack the "capacity to make "informed" choices" is altogether irrelevant. Of course they lack the capacity to choose between, say, careers in data processing and nuclear physics if they can't multiply, but those are choices that needn't be made and that, in any case, are beside the point. In the context of the situation there is always "informed" choice. A two-year-old is better "informed" on whether to use his right or left hand to hold a spoon or a toy hammer than all the "relevant" social units in existence, better "informed" on whether to color trees green or purple than the editor of Art News. And those choices, at that moment, are not only relevant choices, they are, in fact, much larger choices than a simple choice of career at the age of twenty-five. The important issue is the ability of those who have power over his young life to distinguish when "capacity" - i.e., "informed choice" - exists, and when it does not. The fact that the individual may not be able to make an informed choice about the career he will follow twenty years later does not mean that he cannot make an informed choice about the way he begins to proceed toward the ability to make that choice. Unless one blindly follows some sort of behavioristic model and regards every child as a laboratory rat there is always "capacity" - which is to say that there is always space for informed choice and, as Chomsky so elegantly pointed out in his critique of Skinner, a capacity for a language that the individual has never heard before.

The fear of labor and minority groups, as expressed in The Question of Career Education (p. 27) is that "if the philosophy of the school is to allow a child to decide. . . their children may not choose college." But that fear, if indeed it expresses the real feelings of the majority of those in whose name it is made, reflects a misunderstanding of what goes in schools and what college can deliver. Of course schools are stulifying and discriminatory; they always have been and, as presently constituted, are always likely to be. The very things that make those labor and minority groups believe that the schools have power to select people in (into college, into white collar jobs, into prestige) are - by definition - also the things that empower them to select people out. Whether the claim of the schools that the selections are made on reasonable grounds is correct is not at issue here; the fact is that they help make it, and they provide the mystification ("equal opportunity" - intelligence tests, "objective standards") that is used to justify it. The A is meaningless without the D, the top of the class without the bottom; as the school defines them, half the children in any group are below average. One can legitimately inquire whether the choices schools make are legitimate; more significantly, one can also ask whether such selections should be made at all. But no debate about "career education" touches anything more than a facade, another rationalization for choices that had been made before and which will be made long after "career education" is relegated to the dust bin of forgotten programs. What is significant is that the selections have little to do with the "informed free choice" of individuals - that they invariably restrict informed free choice, reduce options, and teach the individual that he is, one way or another, incompetent. Stultification is as much the product of the "preferences of relevant social units" - of middle-class bias, of snobbery, of fear, of teacher attitudes, of parental ambitions - as is any sort of individual enlargement. No individual, acting under "informed free choice," elects to be stupid, limited or incompetent. Stupidity, as Jules Henry pointed out long ago, is almost always the consequence of training - i.e., the work of "relevant social units."

All this seems to beg a question: Who judges what is stupid? Is the individual the only judge? The answer to the last question is obviously "no;" there is no simple answer to the other. Obviously what one "relevant social unit" (say the school) regards as appropriate, another (say the parents) does not. The whole exercise of which this paper is a part is obviously a reflection of a disagreement between "relevant social units" about what is or is not stupid. That disagreement itself - like any disagreement - creates room for choice: if there were cultural unanimity (as in a primitive society) or enforced consensus (as in a totalitarian state) that room would be much more restricted. The whole point of education in a free society is that "capacity" for choice must be enlarged through the exercise of such choice, and through the understanding that finally it is the individual who makes the choice for himself: Is this stupid or is it not?

In any ideal world, the only reasonable course for the educationally disenfranchised would be to work to disestablish the academic priesthoods and hierarchies, to demand that all people of a certain age get the same public subsidies to be spent in any educational program, that certification and credentialling, where they are absolutely necessary for the public safety (this would exclude teachers, for example) would be based on competence and not on certain courses taken or years of college completed. In the real world the degree itself still has to be recognized as a way of converting class or economic advantage into "education" and "education" back into economic advantage. The only way to break that cycle for the large groups who are now excluded from it is through fundamental economic and social changes. There is no way to redistribute what the degree appears to buy by redistributing the degrees; to try is simply to reinforce the system.

The issue always comes back to education - not schooling, not administrative convenience, not community pressure for order - but the sort of education (which is the only real education) which implies enlargement, confidence and the ability to control one's own life. It is not something that is handed out six hours a day by members of the teachers union, it does not begin in kindergarten, and it does not end with (or necessarily include) graduate school. The concern about the formal categories of degrees, college admission and careers is itself an element that corrupts "informed free choice" and thus impedes genuine education. The more capriciously that concern is expressed, the earlier it is injected in the educational process, the more corrupting it becomes. The whole point of formal education is that it gives children the space to grow, to make choices, to follow interests, to pursue activities which do not necessarily track with any specific adult career. I have already pointed out that particularly in the early years free choice is limited, but it should be limited only at the point where no reasonable person can argue that it is informed - where, for the child, it becomes dangerous or destructive or chaotic. In those years there will be little choice of career direction, but there will be choices. If one defines the "preferences of relevant social units" as the creation of the largest number of options for each individual - including, at the appropriate time, a real option to reject college - then by definition "informed free choice" of career direction has to be consistent with those preferences. Which is only to say that both the "relevant social units" and the individual, exercising "informed free choice," will prefer real education to training, growth to stultification, opportunity to restriction. If they do not, then the terms are meaningless.

INFORMED? FREE? CHOICE?

Margaret Fallers

This section of the debate is framed as follows: Can the contention be supported that individual exercise of informed free choice of career direction will result in occupational choices that are consistent with the preferences of relevant social units? Of course, this is a most difficult question, but to answer it most directly: career direction is and only can be decided by a complex interaction of expectations of the community and the individual development of a growing young person.

To take some hard examples: If a young woman wants to plan her life as a loving wife and mother, and the media, the school, her peers, and perhaps her restless mother are endlessly bombarding her with her responsibility to have a career, can you say that she is in a position to make an informed free choice?

If the brightest black boy in school is dying to be a professional basketball player, and the leaders of his community, the media, and his high school biology teacher, knowing of his Science Fair project on sickle cell anemia, endlessly ask him why he doesn't plan to be a doctor, can he be said to be in a position to make informed free choice?

If a young man with average ability and average grades in college and with more than his share of self-doubt, wants to be a bank teller and his driving, workaholic father is endlessly after him to apply to law school, can he be said to be in a position to make informed free choice?

The question is framed in this way, probably, because the proponents of the Career Education programs claim that their plans will make possible individual informed free choice of career direction. But, of course, no individual is free of community pressures, or of the influences of the institutions in which he develops; and no institutions are free of forces seeking to mold them.

How does a person make a career choice? (Or is it even possible to ask that question in that form which seems to leave so much freedom in the hands of the individual?) We all know from our own experiences, and from those of others, that many factors are involved; so many that listing them would be endless; although we know that they would include: expectations of parents; models of parents and siblings; early childhood play experiences; influence of friends; state of the economy; political climate; media pressures; school experience; work done; to say nothing of native physical endowment.

We are only concerned here with two pieces of this large puzzle:

1) What part can, or should, schools play in career direction or career education?

2) Is it reasonable to suggest that an individual can have the opportunity for informed free choice of career?

The concern with these questions arises, I believe, because there does not seem to be a suitable role for a great many young people in our society. There does not seem to be a satisfactory series of steps by which young people become adults. This unsatisfactory situation causes us to question our present institutions. Most young people are not used, maybe are not needed, very extensively in household work; and they are not needed, and not welcome, in the work world. Over the years, our society, for many converging reasons, has come to expect most young people to be best served by being in school.

At the same time, no thinking person has really supposed that schools were the only institutions which would socialize young people, and it has been assumed that families, religious groups, the media, etc., would each play a part. However, there has been some evidence that for many young people, both families and religious groups are inadequate support; and it is, as yet, very difficult to evaluate the place of the media; and there has been increasing evidence that schools can not fulfill as many expectations as have often been asked of them and that many young people do not seem to be able to be fitted so exclusively into the student role, especially in high school.

Discontent with the schools has expressed itself in several ways, but among others, it has been claimed that schools are not preparing young people for the world of work. We are a work oriented society; we value work; we believe that a person's occupation defines his life; in a remarkably complex way, we get our identity from our work. The first question which an American asks someone he meets is, what do you do?

It is understandable in an open society that this emphasis on the crucial place of the occupational roles should be so and even more so in an open society with a history of immigration of peoples from diverse backgrounds. And it is understandable that we should put great emphasis on training our youth for work. In fact, the emphasis on training for occupational roles was supported for years by the assumption that the schools were preparing young people for work; but that assumption is increasingly in doubt.

The combination of discontent with the schools and the obvious fact that the work world doesn't want the young people, has brought us to scrutinize our society's institutions for the socialization of young people and these institutions' roles in the transition from school to work. It has been a factor in bringing the Career Education program into being. In considering these matters we begin with the assumption that young people growing up must not only have training in the skills and knowledge of the society which has traditionally been taught in schools, but must also (1) have experience in responsibility, (2) share tasks with adults, and (3) learn skills to be of service to others.

What part of all this can, or should, the schools do?

What Should Schools Do?

Schools should teach the basic skills and the common culture. Easy to say; hard to accomplish. As we all know, over and over we have struggled to work out how best to teach basic skills. What about teaching the common culture? Every society must pass on to its young people the common wisdom of its ancestors. Of course, with Marie Rodriquez, David Stein, Alma Olson, George Fugikami, and Ali Musa sitting there in the front row, it does give one pause to think what the common culture is. But only momentary pause, because then one remembers that these young people have much in common to learn as they all reside in modern industrial society, in a democracy, in the United States, in a world struggling with crowded cities, TV, violence, inflation and talk of a 3-4 day work week.

In elementary school all students must be taught reading, writing, arithmetic and begin to learn joy in imagination, skill in playing with others, skill in planning a group undertaking, sympathy for those in pain, tolerance for those who are different and some knowledge of the history of the community and the country. All high school curriculum must include reading of some classics; knowledge of math and statistics; understanding of some kinds of artistic expression; more experience in reading and writing; knowledge of science, of great men and women, of politics and economics, of criticism and appreciation of mass media; consideration of [illegible] problems of right and wrong; and, with luck, some experience of responsibility.

We must sympathize with the teachers who have the task. They must teach this common culture, but do it in a vast variety of ways, taking students from where they are and moving them on toward understanding. The range of ability of students must be faced. To be sure, it is baffling to plan a curriculum for students who are discouraged or turned off, who are deprived of organized existence or of extensive training at home, who are unguided in discipline of thought and emotion. There are such students in every school. It is one of the necessary ambiguities of democratic society that we must work, without cynicism, at the same time to offer the same curriculum to all students and yet know that to do so is to have each school curriculum unique. The uniqueness may come from poverty, wealth, ethnic makeup of the community, cultural advantage, geography, size of community, etc., but each school and each teacher must think of intelligent ways to include the diversity with the common values and wisdom.

It is not that I don't see that describing the American political system in Harlem presents different challenges to the teacher than teaching it in Scarsdale, but a good teacher can see pitfalls in both places! It is not that I don't see that presentation of Mark Twain presents different obstacles in the South Side of Chicago than in Evanston; or of describing the Civil War in Atlanta and in Boston.

What I have just described is curricular direction. And for young people in our society to become valuable citizens in a working democratic open society, and to become fulfilled adults, I see no way but to plow on, each teacher and each school working on ways to teach the central core curriculum. Can schools do more? We have said that growing up requires learning a sense of responsibility. By that I mean opportunities to be responsible for one's own acts and decisions with awareness of the consequences of such decisions and acts in the lives of others. Our society makes this growth difficult.

There are young people in our society who have too much responsibility, too soon. I see them in the community in which I live, and they are usually girls age 10-13. One girl is in charge of 3-5 younger boys and girls for whole days and weeks at a time in the summer; in the winter for school vacations, Saturday and Sundays. School is, for those girls, protection from too much responsibility, from exploitation. But it is much more common for young people to go on until they are 18-20 years old with relatively few opportunities to exercise much responsibility.

This is not the forum in which to urge families to give careful thought to this matter. And, of course, it is possible (and you, and I, know some heartwarming examples) for modern homes to gradually train young people in responsibility, producing even in those who are students for many years, adults greatly to be admired in this quality.

But can schools offer chances for learning to take increased responsibility? Yes, to a degree, but it takes perceptive, intelligent teachers and they are in very short supply. Responsibility is taught in subtle ways in elementary school - in expecting consistency of both teachers and students; in demanding justice in treatment of all students by teachers; in careful evaluation of each student's talents and expectation of their use; in setting a tone of serious purpose in daily activities. In high schools, opportunities for training in responsibility, too, are legion, but they are subtle and require more good teachers than there ever are. The need for more chances for more young people to learn and to practice responsibility is one of the reasons both the supporters of Career Education and I propose changes which will involve more activities outside school, and more activities which may bring young people into contact with other adults.

The third of my elements of growing up is training in being of service to others. Can schools offer an opportunity for service to others? It is necessary to teach all young people, regardless of the career that they are to follow, to have skills which make possible and attitudes which impel them, throughout their lives, to devote part of their energies in service to others. Such skills and such an expectation are crucial for training people who will live in a society such as ours with all the forces of impersonality and with such fragmented social services. Let me say again, by training in service to others, I do not mean a career choice. I mean that all young people, regardless of the career they are to follow, must learn to expect to be of service to others and must be taught skills to make this possible.

However, it is relatively difficult for schools to devise ways for young people to be of service to others on any large scale and schools are not the appropriate institutions to do it. Time must be made for other institutions to serve this purpose in training young people. Communities must develop other institutions in which young people can, and must, participate in giving service to such groups as very young children, the elderly and the ill, the handicapped or the weak; or to contribute to service in park districts, in hospitals, in recreation areas, in environment projects.

The fourth and final of my elements of socialization is the learning of an occupation. Can schools contribute to learning about careers or teach occupational skills? Of course, they contribute. In no way would it be possible for schools to teach young people for eight to twenty years of their lives and not contribute to their knowledge of the occupations of their society; to their attitudes toward work; to the skills necessary for future careers. However, the contribution must be indirect, not direct, and should involve the training in basic skills, responsibility and service which I have already described.

As students go through high school, forces at home, in the community, in the media, among their peers, force them to make choices which affect their future occupations. It is at this time that young people begin to face the limitations of their skills, abilities and opportunities. Occupational decisions come out of the interaction of these sets of forces.

Do the proponents of Career Education offer help with the problems raised?

The proponents of Career Education, if I understand them correctly, speak to matters I have mentioned. They, too, are concerned that young people need more active roles, training in attitudes necessary for adulthood, involvement with other adults as well as with teachers, skills and knowledge necessary to have a productive occupation and to have the ability to be fulfilled adults. I so much agree with their concerns and so much disagree with how they would meet the concerns! Let me explain.

To begin with, my overwhelming impression of the Career Education approach is that it asks a student to be engrossed in self-analysis. We have enormous need in our society for people who can try to imagine themselves in the shoes of others, for people who can work with and plan with others in their community, for people who can give up some of their own satisfactions for the common good. It does not seem to me that it is helpful to increase the natural self-centeredness of young people by asking them over and over to think about themselves, who they are and what their characteristics are - even their strengths and weaknesses. The self-centeredness of the Career Education program distresses me. Besides, the problem with early self-analysis is that there has to be a self before there can be analysis of it. Early self-analysis is premature as well as selfish.

Second: We are an open society. An open society has costs, but it also has strengths. We do not need to ask young people to make early specific choices of career. We can keep open the opportunities while young people grow in skill and maturity. Surely we want young people to learn about their society and the occupations within it, but we do not want to encourage early decisions about goals. They are too apt to be either too unrealistic or too narrow.

Third: I agree with Mr. Koerner when he says that whatever disclaimers Career Education supporters may give, one is appalled in reading its literature at the "meanness of its vision." I agree when he says that it has ". . . a definition that is so uncompromisingly economic, so unabashedly narrow in conception, so relentlessly tied to the gross national product, and so anti-intellectual." And when he says, "What a commentary it would be on universal education if after a century and more of experience with public schooling, on the scale that we have attempted it, the nation were to accept the proposition that the greatest aim of its schools, their highest goal and ultimate purpose, was not to lead people toward a worthy and examined life, not to provide them with some grasp of the long cultural, esthetic, and intellectual tradition of which they are a part - but that the highest goal is just to get people into jobs and to condition them to a life in the marketplace." (What is Career Education? Occasional Papers, No. 20, Council for Basic Education, 1972, p. 11.)

Fourth: It is an insult to children to pretend that they can be taught that all jobs are equally prestigious. Status differentiation is learned in the subtle early emotional world of childhood, not in the abstract in the classroom. If respect for work can be taught at all in the classroom, it is through daily observance of a competent teacher hard at work, expecting of the students accomplishment of assigned tasks of good quality. The enormous challenge of the classroom is to try to teach each student not that all careers are equal, but that respect is expected for those students more clever than he and those less clever than he; for those like him and those different from him. As for providing guidance toward career choice: by and large, teachers are not experienced in the world of work outside school and will not be convincing teachers about the occupational fields.

An open society must live with the problems of young people's stumbling along the path to occupational roles. For elementary schools, it seems to me, that the plans of the Career Education proponents are destructive in their definition of tasks. When I was in elementary school, our class went to visit the local business street and came back to build, with orange crates and cardboard, a post office, a shop, and a bookstore, but I am almost sure that there was no thought that any of us were to ponder during the project what we might do as a career. We were being taught to be observant, to pound in a nail, to behave with respect to local merchants, to work together as a team to build the post office.

Young people in elementary school must not be asked to try to picture their life far ahead or to assess themselves in any detail. They need to live in the present and to store up experiences on which to build in the future. "What are you going to be when you grow up?" is a threatening and unsettling question which we ask young people over and over - demonstrating more our anxieties about an open society than our thought as to how the child could possibly answer, or on what basis he could answer.

In high school: The objections which I have to Career Education in high school have been well spelled out by other critics, i.e., to teach attitudes about work, without work experience, is an empty pretense. To teach that specific career choice for most people is a matter of long-range rational individual planning defies experience. The proponents of Career Education have tried to plan ways for young people to have a more active experience, to have more contact with adults in addition to teachers and to have a career goal give a purpose to learning. However, to visit a factory is an interesting activity, more vivid for some young people than to read about it, but still basically it is a passive experience, a learning experience, not a work experience. To have the parents come to a school to describe their work is chancy, but does engage the parents in a school activity and does vary the routine of a school day, but it does not give a work experience to the students. To have a seventh grader who has expressed an interest in what banks do, study about banking, visit a bank and try to picture himself in one of the roles, is an interesting project, but not a project which gives much basis for career choice.

I speak critically of these proposals because I am so disappointed. We need answers and solutions to the very problems they address, but these are not the answers.

If Not These Of The Proponents Of Career Education, Are There Changes Which Would Be Helpful?

Yes, I think that there are changes which we should work toward both changes in schools and changes to make possible involvement of other institutions of our society in the socialization of our young people. My three suggestions are:

- think corners
- think small
- think less

1. Think corners: When I was a high school principal, I used to look around the school and try to figure out for which young people school was a satisfying and constructive experience. It seemed to me that in large part it was for those young people who had "corners" - students who felt that they had a place in school which gave them an orientation: the basketball team, the newspaper, the biology room, the theater, the snack bar office, the tutoring program office, the ecology project, the jazz band, the shop. The students with a corner sallied forth from the corner to complete classwork on time, to help with other school activities, to enter into classroom discussions with confidence, to make friends, and they came to school each day with a sense of purpose. It was not because these students were necessarily going to work as a career in drama, biology, band, shop basketball, or office work, but because that day was going to involve some learning, some companionship, and some responsibility. I long for high schools with more corners.

2. Think small: If all schools had no more than 500 students, many of our problems would be less serious. All students would be known by all teachers and all administrators; administrators could teach a class or two each year; there would be more corners and more students would find corners at their schools. In sports, there would be more places on the teams and we could join the slogan of our University's intramural program: "Help stamp out spectators!"

3. Think less: Schools for many years now have been the institutions of our society, along with the family, responsible for the teaching of young people. This is changing for various reasons, many already mentioned. We must strongly support the important role schools have to play, strong support giving adequate resources so that the role can be well fulfilled. But at the same time, we must speak out and say that young people do not need to be in school so much time. Students should be in school fewer hours/day and fewer days/year.

We must resist forces in our society which make schools custodial. In our society (and probably in all societies) custodial institutions do not command respect and have great difficulty in maintaining positive programs and adequate morale. Our society to a dismal extent has given a custodial function to schools - to keep young people off the streets, out of the work force and away from the care of working parents.

We need to change to have young people in school less time, both because it will make it possible for schools to do what they are best equipped to do better and because young people need other experiences as well. Let us recognize that there is a drift in this direction already, whether we are planning it or not. Those who are not closely in touch with high schools may not realize that attendance at schools is changing. Many, perhaps most, high school students are now in school only about half of the day. Often students need not come until their first class, leave after their lass class, are not required to work in study halls at "free periods." High schools are giving up the task of being completely responsible for young people all day. It is interesting to note that this pattern of student attendance is most characteristic of schools in wealthy districts and in poor districts, less so in moderate income districts as yet. Truancy, too, is causing fewer young people to be in school each day. The very high level of truancy in schools is under-reported and police, truant officers, and school officials have no wish to see this too clearly; they do not know what to do with students who won't or don't go to school.

Conclusion

This brings me to my final point. We must work to engage other institutions in the socialization and education of young people. We must have young people from early ages participating with adults, outside school, in tasks of the society. I do not agree with Career Education proponents that we must encourage self-analysis and teach about occupations and about work. Rather we must so arrange our tasks and our time so that young people (I speak mainly of high-school-age students), alongside adults, gradually participate in society's tasks.

What other institutions must be involved? Different ones in different communities. The proponents of Career Education have identified many of them and have made overtures to them. We must support and watch and evaluate the few imaginative programs in which the Career Education programs are supporting not schools, but other institutions in programs of work, training and alternative projects. With the realization that for many people a 3-4 day work week is ahead, we must support the projects of alternatives to work. These proposals suggest major institutional changes but ones which can be made gradually and differently in different communities.

However, the proponents of Career Education have tried to assure everyone that there will be no cost in disruption to make their changes. I make no such promises. They say to businesses that business will not be interrupted. They say to labor unions that no jobs will be threatened, no proposals will be made for juvenile wages. They say that young people working in the tasks of social service will not do jobs adults could do for pay. But social change cannot be made without bumping somewhere. Career Education proponents do not face the issue that we may need to plan for or experiment with a National Job Corps. Career Education proponents avoid proposing participation with religious institutions and seldom propose participation with artistic ones. Many avenues must be explored.

And finally, in what we say about the desirability of an individual's having informed free choice of career direction, the proponents of Career Education and I sound the same. Most fundamentally, I imagine, we differ in the programs we propose to prepare for this choice. Whereas the Career Education program would like from early schooling on to have the student involved in planning and directing his activities toward his career, I feel that we should attempt to make it possible for the young person to have experiences and learning at many stages, suitable for that stage of development which allow him growth, responsibility and service at the time. From these experiences will emerge a career direction.

Question 2: Can We Predict Which Skills Will Be Saleable?

The question was stated to the participants as follows:

> Can the contention be supported that the future of occupations is sufficiently predictable that the provision through formal schooling of job-entry vocational skills is to be preferred to no provision of such skills during formal schooling?

THE AFFIRMATIVE CASE

Garth L. Mangum

My case is a simple one: Look at the record. The occupational structure has maintained a considerable degree of stability for the past thirty years and all the projections of the experts suggest no drastic departures for at least the next ten years. The statement is generally true for state and local as well as national employment.

The Stability of Occupational Structure

Observation of census data supplies ample evidence of that stability. One can compare employment by occupation in each of the 1950, 1960, and 1970 censuses (Decennial Census: 1950, 1960, 1970) with Bureau of Labor Statistics projections to 1985 (Monthly Labor Review, November 1976). Since projections are not available for as many occupations as there are measurements, the projections will not list as many occupations as actual employment for all census occupational classifications. As an indication that the national stability is not simply a "washout" of offsetting trends at state and local levels, similar comparisons can be made by states, such as the State of Missouri. The reader who doubts the typicality of this state is invited to search the census data for preferred areas, and also to compare selected SMSA's for various census years.

Examining the projections, there are only 69 out of 282 occupations listed with stable or declining trends. Of these, only twelve - stenographers, keypunch operators, machinists, pattern and model makers, tool and die makers, farm implement mechanics, compositors and typesetters, bakers, shoe repairers, tailors, dressmakers and seamstresses, and barbers - involve skill contents ever learned through formal schooling. Stenographers, while declining, overlap with the rapidly expanding occupations of secretaries and typists. Farm implement mechanics have outlets through expansion in other mechanical trades. Compositors and typesetters are more generally trained through apprenticeship than by vocational education. Five of those twelve occupations are holding stable in employment and six are declining. Of course, change has been substantial and one can emphasize the change or the stability according to purpose and preference. However, there is no shred of evidence to support the position that occupational change is so rapid that skills taught in vocational schools obsolesce too rapidly to support an adequate return on either the public's or the individual's investment.

Occupations change by reason of:

1. changes in consumer taste, tending to the abandonment of one product or service in preference for another;
2. exhaustion or relative scarcity of resources requiring shifts in the nature, or location, or relative costs of production;
3. changes in the techniques of production - technological change as it is usually understood.

The first is the most volatile, but only the current version of the "hula hoop" emerges and disappears without warning.

The second is foreseeable but we often fail to heed substantial warnings, as note the energy issue. The shift from coal to natural gas in the 1950's did have drastic effects in certain localities, as will the reverse process during the 1970's. But the impact on vocational education, locally or nationally, was not large.

The latter - changes in techniques of production - actually gives longer warnings. The process of discovery, invention, innovation, and dissemination is a reasonably long one. How long have we been talking about computers, numerical controls, and laser beams? Research a dozen years ago concluded that no technological development could have a substantial impact on employment opportunities without at least a ten-year warning (1966). There is no subsequent research indicating a shortening of this process. If long-term decline in occupational demand catches a school or its students over-invested, it is for want of heeding the warning signs, not from the lack of warning.

The Selection of Training Occupations

Even the most technologically vulnerable occupations are not a significant threat to vocational education. Vocational educators are not great risk takers. The courses they teach are those that tend to be in demand year after year: clerical, health, automotive, welding and machinery, graphic arts, electronic data processing, and drafting. Compare the catalogues of today and ten years

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Reference List: Lynn, Frank, "An Investigation of the Rate of Development and Diffusion of Technology in our Modern Industrial Society," *The Employment Impact of Technological Change*, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966.

ago for any vocational or technical school, community college, or university. Where are those courses in which people were trained, only to find the occupation had disappeared? Table 1 lists the occupations in which training is provided by a typical area vocational school and technical college. Few would be found with a substantially different roster. Occupational education is probably more justifiably criticized for unwillingness to risk training for unusual, new, and emerging jobs than for training in vulnerable ones.

The Trustworthiness of Projections

The debate issue implies concern not only with the durability of current training occupations, but also with the ability to predict future occupational demand, whether for purposes of education planning or for vocational guidance. If it is true that occupations change relatively slowly, that change should be predictable. Projections of employment by occupation and industry are numerous. The primary projector of manpower requirements is the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U. S. Department of Labor. A number of professional and trade associations, research organizations, and other government agencies make projections in occupational areas of special interest, but most of them base their work on that of the BLS. At the state and local level, some but not all of the State Department of Employment Security also do their own projections. Under recent amendments to Federal Vocational Education laws, federal, state, and local education agencies are required to compile projections in relevant training occupations, but they rely primarily on the expertise of the Labor Department and the State Employment Services.

Can those projections be trusted? Understanding the limitations of projections requires some knowledge of the methodology of their construction. The projector compiles data from the past and seeks to identify the nature of the trend. Is it linear? Curvilinear? What is the shape of the curve? Will the future experience follow the same trend line as the past? The projector tries to identify the factors responsible for the trends which have occurred, then makes judgments concerning the future path of those factors. Assumptions must be made about the future and a factor-by-factor analysis must be based on that future. The projector accumulates all possible information and then turns the trend line up or down according to the indications from that information. Projections can go wrong either because the assumptions proved false or because the projections based on them were faulty.

At the national level, the errors in occupational projections have generally been from undue conservatism concerning the growth of new industries such as television or computers. Peace is usually among the assumptions and eruption of a war generally accelerates most trends, though dislocations will occur from reallocation of resources. Those occupations heavily influenced by such long-range factors as birth rates and population movement are most dependable. Technological change is not a disturbing factor in ten-year projections. Those impacted by consumer tastes or international developments are the most volatile.

Accurate projections are more difficult at the state or local level because, with a more limited economic base, any shift in a particular firm or industry exercises greater leverage on total employment for an occupation. For several years, the State Departments of Employment Security conducted Area Skill Surveys as a basis of local projections. They would ask employers how many persons by occupation they expected to employ over the next five years. Projections based on these expectations proved highly undependable because most employers have no way of knowing what their customers will demand in the future. These have been abandoned in favor of projections of past trends tempered by more technically determined factors such as demographic and technological developments and the state of the natural economy.

To emerge from the schools in a time of recession is a different issue. Is it realistic to expect vocational educators to be economic forecasters? Aside from the business cycle, local labor markets are subject to many fluctuations. A new firm locates or an existing one fails or relocates. A major construction project creates temporary demand and then falls off to an operating level. The smaller the location, generally, the greater the vulnerability to these short-run structural changes.

Obviously, projecting the future is risky business. Nevertheless, the experience has been that the future is always more like than unlike the past and present. There is an essential stability in the society and the economy with basic trends that do not leave the future entirely opaque. Levitan, Mangum, and Marshall (1976) conclude:

> On balance, although there is need for improvement in manpower projections, their deficiencies are not a serious limiting

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Reference List: Sar, A.; Mangum, Garth A.; and Marshall, Ray, Human Resources and Labor Markets, Harper & Row Publishers: New York, 1976, pg. 110.

> factor in program analysis and decision-making. Methodological improvements can and should be made, but steps to improve the presentation and dissemination of available projections are probably more important. In the end, the manpower problems of the past years cannot be blamed upon the lack of information concerning the manpower future. Action, not information, has been the absent factor.

Changing Occupational Content

Change within the content of occupations is more frequent than the advent and decline of occupations. A school may not have the most recent or most sophisticated technology available. Schools should and most do try to keep up-to-date, but budgets are unlikely to keep them at the frontier of new developments. Nevertheless, vocational education prepares for entry-level jobs. No employer expects (or at least none ever gets) a fully productive individual from any school at any level. He hires people with the rudiments and they learn the rest on the job. That's as true of professors as it is of machinists. A school could become outmoded in its treatment of the basic requirements of an occupation, but to keep up is not an insuperable problem. Certainly not one that is so serious as to negate the worth of formal occupational education within the schools.

Supply Considerations

Why, then, data that say only 37 percent of vocational graduates end up in training-related jobs? Try looking at the supply side rather than demand. How many vocational graduates decide to continue for additional schooling? Over one out of five. Seventy-percent of those available for work find it in training-related jobs. How many learn in school what is perhaps the most important lesson to come from any employment - "I don't like it"? Is that an argument for abolishing occupational education?

If formal in-school occupational education is to be faulted for unlikely usefulness, the problems are to be found primarily on the supply side in the vagaries of human beings and their career development process. Everything we know about career development suggests that the years before about 25 are highly exploratory and that most do not settle down to the primary occupational pursuit until about age 30. The ages of 16 and 17, which are the ages when most vocational education occurs, really precede occupational exploration for most. A high proportion of 16 and 17-year-olds work at least sporadically and gain experience. However, their motives are not those which lead to serious and lasting occupational choices. At 18-20, serious trial and error exploration among occupational alternatives is under-way, either on the job or in the exploration-oriented early years of college. Most majors are not chosen in college until after age 20, and even then that does not narrow to an occupation. It is unrealistic to expect the noncollege-bound to be more foresighted and stable. But even if one argues against deep and lasting investment in early training in specific occupations, that does not argue against exploratory training early and formal preparation in specific occupational skills later.

Alternative Methods of Skill Acquirement

Much of the issue concerning the appropriateness of vocational education is, at its roots; an issue of the relative efficiency of alternative methods of skill acquirement. Only about one-third of the jobs in the U. S. economy require any pre-entry training (Mangum, 1976). About one-third can be performed by anyone who can read, write, and compute at the seventh-grade level (which is the average for high school graduates), drive an automobile, and demonstrate modest manual dexterity. Another one-third require no pre-entry training but some on-the-job training. The other one-third should technically be the realm of formal occupational training, whether secondary or post-secondary, vocational, technical, or academic.

Criteria for determining which skills are best learned in which settings have not been developed and promulgated. I have made a first cut at such criteria elsewhere and consider that one of the highest priorities in occupational research (Mangum, 1976, pp. 138-42). Schools frequently make the error of training for occupations which do not require their services. Then a cost effectiveness comparison proves them lacking because those not undergoing costly training do as well. Or comparisons are made between vocational students and academic students even though they are preparing for and enter quite different jobs. Because the apple doesn't prove to be an orange, the grower of it is criticized.

Reference List: Mangum, Garth L., *Employability, Employment, and Income*, Olympus Publishing Co.: Salt Lake City, 1976, p. 132.

Relevance to Career Education

As important as the issue addressed in this debate may be, one should not be confused that it has anything to do with career education. Even if the negative proposition were positively proven and accepted it would not have any significance, positive or negative, to the question of the worth of career education. Career education has been clearly defined as encompassing all aspects of education which help prepare one for work (Hoyt, 1974). It emphasizes work values, attitudes toward work, work habits, career relevance as motivation for learning, awareness of the meaning of work in life and society, exploration of career alternatives, decision-making skills, job search skills, and so forth. Some career educators include occupational skill training as one of many components of career education; others consider the two to be basically separate but related things. Only those who do not understand career education confuse it with formal, in-school occupational training and most of them apparently do not understand that either.

Summary

In summary, the pace of occupational change in the U. S. economy is substantial but far less than popular opinion would often have it. Occupations almost never disappear or even decline substantially without at least a decade's warning. Recession and special local circumstances may offer "horrible examples" but they are no base for so drastic a policy as eliminating occupational and vocational education.

Far more important is prevocational exploration to help a student discover his or her preferences before overinvesting in the unsatisfying. It is in this supply dimension that occupational training shows its greatest weakness - preparing for an occupation before one is sure that it will prove attractive. From these considerations emerge two recommendations:

1. Develop criteria for determining which skills are best acquired by whom in what settings, and

2. Get on with the real issues of career education -

Reference List: Hoyt, Kenneth, Introduction to Career Education, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., 1974.

a) Does it motivate for learning of course content, and

b) Does it improve long-term career satisfaction?

On no other grounds can it be faulted or supported.

TABLE 1: TYPICAL VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL COURSES

Typical Technical College
(Utah Technical College, Provo)

- Apparel Manufacturing
- Auto Body
- Auto Mechanic
- Buildings and Grounds Maintenance
- Business Machine Technician
- Business Machine and Instrument Technician
- Carpentry - Building Trades
- Carpentry - Millwork Cabinet and Fixture Making
- Clerk Typist
- Dental Assisting
- Design and Drafting
- Diesel and Heavy Duty Mechanics
- Electrical and Automation Technician
- Electromechanical Technician
- Electronics Technician
- Fashion Merchandising
- Graphic Communications
- Heavy Equipment Operator
- Hotel/Restaurant Management
- Machine Shop
- Marketing
- Medical Secretary/Receptionist
- Mental Health Aide
- Nurse Aide
- Petroleum Marketing
- Professional Driving
- Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
- Secretarial Science
- Secretary, Legal
- Stenographer
- Television and Radio Technician
- Watch Repair
- Welding

Typical Area Vocational School
(Sevier Area
Vocational Center, Utah)

- Auto Body
- Auto Mechanic
- Business Machine Technician
- Carpenter - Building Trades
- Clerk Typist
- Cosmetology
- Design and Drafting
- Diesel and Heavy Mechanics
- Electrician
- Electronics Technician
- Food Service
- Nurse's Aide

WHAT IS WRONG WITH TRYING TO PROGRAM "SKILLS" PACKAGED FOR CAREER EDUCATION?

C. Arnold Anderson

> "Can the contention be supported that the future of occupations is sufficiently predictable that the provision through formal schooling of specific job-entry skills is practicable?"

Career education, in current usage, embraces both "learning to do" a marketable skill and also "learning about career options," including "acquiring positive attitudes toward work." All of these can occur in school (presumably with increasing definiteness in successive grades), between school and beginning work, or after initial employment - and in various combinations such as "sandwich courses." Since the world of work is not soon going to become less changeful, predictability must include forecasts of altered profiles of "demanded skills" plus forecasts of individual paths of career development during years of employment. Prediction, as will be elaborated at several points, is hindered by the fact that supplies of skills alter demands for skills. I would today defend the unduly simplified assertion that I wrote in 1967: "It is not necessarily true that training in one specific skill is always better than no specialized training at all."[1]

The main headings of the paper are as follows. From a forensic point of view, the crux of this paper lies in the fourth section.

1. Introduction
2. Some foundations for any comprehensive approach to Career Education
3. Will-of-the-wisp curricular plans
4. The central task: fitting candidates for occupations to manpower requirements.

Introduction

It is said that three-fourths of workers in the United States possessing more than secondary education have no particularized training for their job. But what is "readiness" for employment? Indeed, what is a "job"?[2]

Any policy discussion today about formal education must steer between disillusionment with schools and utopian expectations from properly reformed schools.[3] In advanced economies the capitalized value of "human capital" approximates that of physical plus fiduciary wealth. Despite a flood of reports about new designs for work groups, I would not expect soon to see an accompanying "new romance of work." Just in the discrepancy between the two foregoing statements lies one major impetus for the ongoing debate about new ways to orient youth to a lifetime of earning a living.

Worthington[4] could serve as spokesman for those who believe that Career Education can become a vehicle for educational transformation. Earlier infusions of "vocational education," however, seem to have had only modest effects if we accept Grubb and Lazerson's recent history,[5] and my own uneasiness is that Career Education will have the usual short and superficial life of an educational fad.[6] I find the literature proposing the new reform to have too many non-sequiturs at crucial points.

Sneddon (in 1910)[7] supported the formalization of work preparation: "There can be little doubt that, in the process of social evolution, the time has arrived when vocational as well as liberal education must be conferred, as far as the large majority of people are concerned, by institutions especially devoted to this end. But these institutions must be schools." The Moseley Commission[8] visiting from the United Kingdom in 1903, judged American pupils to be superior at application (as had other European observers during the later 19th century), although some commissioners were doubtful as to what the specific influence of schools had been.[9]

The endemic vocationalism within our post-secondary schools proves, unfortunately, to carry few if any clear implications as to a desirable program of Career Education in lower schools.[10] Indeed, the "general" component in specialized courses is large over most of tertiary education. In these discussions we need to keep questions about "specialization" (and the related distinction between humanities" and "practical" subjects) separate from debates as to when "quotas" (numerical clauses) are justified in tertiary and even secondary schools. The point is that the requisites for an adequate supply of labor can be specified in several ways; my preference is as follows:

a. opportunity to use skills must be clearly visible;
b. much varied schooling and training must be available in order to turn out sufficient kinds and numbers of skilled individuals;
c. there must be an approximately differentiated structure of incentives for individuals to select themselves into congenial training and jobs;
d. the social milieu must stimulate people to use their training in more than a perfunctory mood.[11]

As will be said at several points, occupations (e.g., as listed in a census) are ill-defined entities. A career is a linked series of occupations (or skills), though not every lifetime of work is a career.

Some Foundations for any Comprehensive Approach to Career Education

It is a widely shared conviction of our epoch that participation in adult life must be prepared for by instruction received during several (or many) years of schooling. Except under authoritarian governments, however, educators concerned specifically with vocational preparation are likely to have only a limited voice in deciding what the content of that part of schooling will be. Let us agree that it is possible to strengthen the connection of school with society, that we can enhance the "relevance" of schooling.[12] But bearing in mind the premise that what is learned in school must be of "general" applicability as well as particular in content, few specifications about what shall be taught can be deduced from these sorts of consensus.[13]

It can be observed that programs of social amelioration today tend to be phrased as variants of "manpower" programs, and this feature characterizes contemporary debates about "vocational" education. Not so often do writers perceive that analysis in terms of concepts about "human resources" is more subtle than a manpower formulation - and confining oneself to "human capital" theory is down-right ascetic.

Husen recently traced reforms of Swedish higher education to two roots: demands for a specifically trained work force and a national commitment to satisfy the educational needs of individuals.[14] But neither aim is unequivocal and the two aims can be seriously conflicting. Hence discussions such as that giving rise to the present report are indeed appropriate. The remainder of the present paper deals with two broad contentions: 1) There are serious pedagogical obstacles to incorporation of units about Career Education (or any similar wide-ranging topic) within the curricula of elementary or secondary schools. 2) The assumptions and the outcomes of so-called "manpower forecasting" more often stultify than reinforce policies for occupational orientation of school programs.[15]

Will-of-the-Wisp Curriculum Plans

Overconfidence in the instructional efficacy of curricula is widespread, as it has been in many civilizations and in our own history for centuries. To be sure, this sanguine viewpoint is no stronger about Career Education than about civic education, family life education, or "moral education." Yet it can be instructive to enumerate some sources for this optimism.[16] One support for the belief that curricula are potent arises from the fact that passing through school coincides with "growing up," with socialization generally, and with exposure simultaneously to many other "curricula" such as libraries, Scouts, and age-graded television programs. Also, success in mastering lessons has qualified the individuals who now are making educational policies. Most writers (whether of novels, of court decisions, or of regulations for schools) are legitimated custodians of some cherished curriculum.

A frequent assertion in the burgeoning literature on Career Education is that elementary lessons would have maximum effect upon children's views about the world of jobs because in the early grades the pupil is treated as a whole person.[17] But that assumption ignores contrary arguments about recency of learning, effects of interest upon learning, etc. It is argued by many that if schools should rely more upon unconventional measures (especially of "non-cognitive" attainment), motivation for appreciating the vocational utility of lessons would quicken. Two objections arise. We do not know that the predictive power for adult competence of new sorts of marks would exceed that of present marks. Moreover, shortcomings of "the 3 R's" as the backbone of pre-tertiary schooling have not been demonstrated.

Any school purveys some sort of curricular elements more thoroughly (and more relevantly) than other lessons. Effectiveness varies by sex or age of pupil, by social background, and by extra-school experiences with work. If one uses any typology of curricular components it becomes clear that assumptions about "vocational usefulness," "generality," or motivation for learning and retention eludes simple generalization. I find the following typology useful, and parts of any career-oriented program would be allocated to each of the four cells.

	Parochial	Universal
Cognitive	1	2
Affective	3	4

This scatter of "career" items among the subtypes of curricula points to a persisting ambiguity in all proposals to enhance the practical utility of special programs within the overall program of schools. In particular, those who see "career" as distinct from "vocational" education tend to stress broad "perspectives" about the world of jobs and to schedule the more specific job training for upper-secondary years. But in my view even under the most nearly optimal pedagogic circumstances, pinpointing of lessons toward forecasted profiles of needed skills or occupations is not feasible - as will be set forth in detail in the fourth section of this paper.

Schools have many sorts of effects upon a cohort of youth; the following (out of many possible lists) can carry the discussion forward.[18] This multifunctionality facilitates integration among instructional programs, seen from one aspect, but it also hinders single-minded pursuit of any given theme.

a. Schools increase capabilities to earn a living; in using its capabilities each cohort remakes the occupational structure.

b. In some degree (varying by time and place) schools weaken children's parochial loyalties and prepare them for the more impersonal relationships of the workplace.

c. Schools encourage individuality and awaken pupils' awareness of their potentialities, both of strengths and of weaknesses. Whether classroom experience also instills the sorts of cooperativeness appropriate to the job doubtless varies greatly.

d. Jointly with many other influences, schools help to select and to mould elites.

e. Much of what goes on in schools serves to reinforce existing systems of formal education - and typically to downgrade appreciation of the importance of non-formal learning.

The controversy over the merits of "vocational" education is more than a century old in its modern form. Even when "manual training" was the rubric, the panoply of supporting or adverse argument and evidence has remained surprisingly unchanged. Seventy-five years ago, for example, members of the Moseley Commission credited manual training with widening pupils' awareness of the laboring world.

By possession of even modest sophistication in statistics, contemporary writers can be less bold than members of the Moseley Commission. We realize that either selective enrollment in school or qualities of the environing community or home influences can generate spurious appearances of evidence for the effectiveness of instruction. Moreover, those pupils who undeniably learn lessons about prudent paths to work in "suitable" vocations may be mainly the ones who needed no such help from teachers.

Our optimism in planning new series of lessons--general about work or specific about jobs--is chilled also by learning that pupils now being instructed about vocations seem not to be more informed about the world of work. It is not easy to design relevant lessons. We can suspect (if not yet demonstrate) that from neighbors, classmates, or family, pupils do acquire impressions about the drudgery of labor and the patience needed for coping with a job. However, we possess few maps of how any sort of youth look upon different aspects of vocational life, and ideologists prefer dicta to the gathering of evidence.[19] Especially do we have only a fuzzy picture about changing conceptions of a "career."[20] Amidst all three equivocations and just plain ignorance, knowing that new lessons would be absorbed tells us little about what those lessons should contain.

The most pervasive reason,[21] for many of us, to widen the place of work-oriented lessons is our confidence that it would motivate many half-hearted pupils to put more zeal into their school work. Admittedly, assuming a vocational payoff from any widespread revived interest in school will prove to be as elusive as it was to exorcise apathy and cunning imitation of studiousness.[22] Benefits from the wisest rearrangement of school are continually neutralized by the propensity of contemporary societies to entangle youth's steps from school into work by restrictive entry to apprenticeship and by escalation of minimum wages, even in the face of high or rising unemployment of young people.

"Sequencing" of lessons in schools usually reflects compromise between assumptions (typically factitious) about child development and temptations to "group" pupils so as to reduce the "span of ability" (or of interests) to which teachers must adapt lessons. So, today, we read about research for "stages of vocational thinking" that would be normal or typical. One can expect that many constructers of curricula will hope to find evidence that a child alters how he looks at work as he moves up the ladder of grades. But on these topics we must be wary, for how a child explores his "interests" presents a different "need" for intellectual nourishment than does adjusting materials to reading levels or to levels of mathematical comprehension.[23]

Pupils always differ on any school task. Perhaps it is the now-apathetic pupils who would benefit most from Career Education.[24] Where truly individualized instruction is rejected or not practicable, that assertion tells us little about what to put into lessons. Unless (which is improbable) what pupils wish to learn about jobs is *closely* graduated to age, schools will be tempted to use "tracking" in Career Education--with spillover impulses to revival of tracking in some other subjects. And if Career Education lessons are planned mainly for pupils who as yet know little about work, orderly lessons about work are likely to be withheld from high-achieving pupils. Not incidentally, any such practices of tracking in Career Education would increase tendencies to use schools as "certificating" agencies. Needless to add, any inclination to treat Career Education as a "remedial" program rests on unwarranted beliefs as to what precocious pupils know about jobs. Such a way of relating Career Education to other lessons would act to raise artificially the correlation between schooling and type or level of job.

The implications of expanded programs for the school counselors have received scanty attention. By many counseling is seen as suited to form the keystone of a program in Career Education, but I see it as a weak support.[25] A program in Career Education (conceived either narrowly or broadly) could be useful to many pupils even though as a whole it does not meet even the weak criterion of being "cost effective." Many students normally derive benefit from even poor instruction. But the aims of counseling are disconcertingly vague,[26] and in one way or another counseling rests heavily on manpower forecasting--about which the next section recommends skepticism. And for some unexplained reason, evaluations of the effectiveness of counseling are virtually non-existent. There is reason to believe that counselors will be atypically conservative compared to other teachers and that they will display undue "nannyism."[27] Counselors probably will give undue attention to college-bound pupils who need slight help comparatively in making decisions about training and jobs. As yet we do not know what is the best "package" of vocational information for teachers or for counselors. We must worry also as to whether it will prove difficult to legitimate counselors in the eyes of pupils or students.

It is suggested now and then that counseling could become more effective if the job descriptions in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* were made more detailed. I can discern several major objections to that change. The descriptions of jobs could become unwieldy in length and overweighted with "extraneous" or idiosyncratic traits that now average out in the present categoric format.

To be of greatest utility, descriptions are perhaps best stated parsimoniously on sets of traits that leave salient features of occupations unblurred.

Any comprehensive infusion into curricula of material about working life should ideally entail upgrading of teachers--not just counselors--over a broad front. By some interpretations of Career Education, counselors would no longer be specialized out of the general body of teachers. A comprehensive program to upgrade teachers confronts a major choice: shall uniform and predigested materials about work and jobs be given to all teachers or should teachers be given the capability to prepare adequate lessons themselves?[28] Is it feasible to make sure that most teachers possess a broad understanding of adult vocational life? Yet something approaching such a broad understanding is necessary if career materials are to be integrated into the whole curriculum.

Much of what people write about integrated curricula is utopian.[29] There are formidable obstacles to meaningful integration of any curriculum across subjects. Among other difficulties, proponents of each large program (such as nutrition education or lessons about ethnic pluralism) seek salience more than integration. Where shall we turn to find guidelines for concrete relationships in actual lessons among broad aims?[30] Schools easily become overloaded and relevance has a high price when aims are multiple and at the same time phrased in different modes. For example, how does a teacher devise ways to teach economic principles about job markets and also work out empathetic materials that weaken ethnocentrism?

Specifically, what is to be taught about work skills, career sequences of jobs, or balancing workplace cooperation against building one's own career?[31] What place does teaching "values" have in Career Education as contrasted with its place in inter-ethnic lessons? What does hard work on any lesson, however abstruse, teach about "work values" as compared to what could be instilled by lessons designated as part of Career Education? And what would specialists in "moral education" say about these value aspects of different sorts of lessons? No one as yet has assessed the feasibility of Career Education in the light of experience with civic education. What truly are the pedagogic arguments that suggest we can anticipate a good pay-off from heavy investment in Career Education? After all, there rarely is learning on any topic proportionate to the importance for individual or society of the topic.

The Central Task: Fitting Candidates for Occupations to Manpower Requirements

The proponents of Career Education accept the obligation to ensure that every youth, upon leaving school, shall have a "marketable skill." Thereby the notion of specific or definite congruence between training and occupation is affirmed. Indeed, if "general" education or broad "understanding" about the realm of employment could suffice, little of the drive for practicality that suffuses the movement for Career Education would remain viable. It is just this notion of isomorphism between the realm of occupations and the panoply of preparatory instruction that I find unsupportable. Perhaps unwittingly and in inchoate form, the basic assumption of "manpower forecasting" underlie all full-bodied proposals for Career Education.

Statements of the assumptions of manpower forecasting lie readily at hand, but most of them lack rigor.33 These details will not be repeated here, but crucial items of my critique will be set forth. It is important first to emphasize one relationship that would be directly repudiated by enthusiastic planners but that is played down or ignored in most statements about manpower policy (as in most proposed programs of Career Education). An "occupation" typically is not a definite entity, an occupation is a shifting cluster of skills. To be sure (as Professor Magnum pointed out) recognizable categories of occupations persist over several decades, often without great change in numbers. But as the schooling and the formal and non-formal socialization of successive cohorts change, so also do members of the cohort transform the gamut of "occupations" which they carry on. The range of skills among the would-be workers alters the putative occupational "requirements" with which supplies are supposed by some proponents to correspond.

Every forward-oriented sort of "vocational education" faces two complex tasks of aggregating occupational characteristics. As just pointed out, categories of occupations (and packages of skills) can be combined so as to minimize or to widen heterogenity of the category. And there are dilemmas about the geographic scope of aggregation in the occupational profiles forecasted and for which preparatory instruction is designed.

Profiles or clusters of jobs, or curricular units, and of applicants for jobs can be envisaged for local, for state or regional, or for national labor markets. If the geographic focus is narrow, Career Education can be more "realistic" but such narrowness penalizes lagging localities and disadvantaged individuals. This narrowness is encouraged to the degree that local employers cooperate in designing Career Education programs, despite many benefits to be found in this pragmatic collaboration.[34] In actuality, as we all know, the proportion of school leavers who continue to be employed in their home community diminishes with each passing year.

At the tertiary level two-year community (or junior) colleges are being relied upon to offer comprehensive programs of both career and vocational education.[35] One suspects that few teachers are familiar with the sorts of training offered in the local community college. Training opportunities in local proprietary schools that openly sell training are either overlooked or downgraded by everyone from the Congress and federal civil service down to local "public" school personnel.[36] Indeed, proposals for requiring that such schools give proof of their usefulness to students far exceed the stringency of any proposals for assessing the effectiveness of similar instruction in the "public" schools. Comparison of different kinds of training in a diversified sample of labor markets could lead us into fresh thinking as to where people learn.[37]

Today's discussions about the practical orientation of schools become laden with the same disputes as to purpose, message, and organization that have bedeviled vocational-school teaching for many decades. The voque words of the day that relate to schools and to economic policy reappear in discussions about Career Education. When these disputes become intense, partisans seek simplifications and such vogue phrases as "human resources" are defined narrowly.[38] It becomes easy to forget that occupations are embodied in the lives of persons and that "job clusters" often are manifested in familiar groupings of individuals.

Few of us are adept at viewing an "occupation" in lifetime perspective. Using a static outlook, census rubrics seem commonsensically obvious. If we shift to thinking in terms of similar paths of career development, some of the census rubrics and clusters of occupations lose their interconnectedness. Not often do writers tell us how schooling gives entry to opportunities for learning at work when an occupation is initially entered.[39] Entry to work also carries chances to demonstrate one's attitudes toward work and to reveal one's grasp of how past learning becomes knit into later learning and adaptability.

I discern a common deficiency in proposals for Career Education, for new sorts of counseling, and for job-oriented curricula in general: namely the likelihood that these programs will come to rely heavily on exhortation. As already said, I find little evidence that schools implant chosen values or motives beyond those arising from any seriously pursued school task. Much of the directedness manifest in social behavior arises more from manipulation of incentives to draw upon deep motives than from implanting new motives. But one sees few ways in which schools can restructure work motives when the focusing of incentives for work behavior occurs mainly after school has been left behind.[43]

Career Education presupposes--in common with other sorts of "life adjustment" education--that pupils can be helped to identify and crystallize their individual goals and options in the hope that self-appreciation will be sustained largely by experiences at work. Aside from my particular skepticism about preparation for such experiences, I doubt that Career Education would add to the preparation that has been received in good schools to a degree that would warrant major reconstruction of curricula. The potentials inherent in known ways of introducing youth to work would seem more readily susceptible of improvement. Unfortunately, as disparities among individuals' conditions of life want, disparities in motivation become more central. Manipulation of incentives then has to become more sensitive. Unfortunately the kinds of exhortation prescribed by some advocates of Career Education give promise, as I see it, that there will be little gain in that sensitiveness.

As in any educational program, circumstances determine the efficacy and the appropriateness of the instruction to which pupils are subjected. When homes and community instill good work attitudes, habits, and knowledge about work, Career Education can be preponderantly cognitive. Where officials of school share an anxiety over a proper "balance" in labor markets, exhortation can become minatory and shrill. More urging, however, need produce no more learning.[44]

The previous section of this paper reviewed what seem to be the most intractable pedagogic (or curricular) obstacles to an infusion of school lessons with large elements relating to Career Education. It seems clear that Career Education materials cannot in advance be dovetailed with changing structure of vocational specialization. Nevertheless, the weak underpinnings of "manpower forecasting" need to be exposed more systematically. Thereafter brief sections of exposition will examine what I judge to be more dependable ways of linking work in school to choice of livelihood.

The key word in occupational futurology is "requirements." Advocates postulate that it will be possible to approximate the numbers who will be needed in particular employments at successive future dates.[45] The more complete we wish our manpower accounting to be the narrower are the rubrics we would use, for broad categories are elusive in conception and in enumeration. Again, what is an occupation? If we choose rather to itemize skills rather than occupations, conceptual difficulties may be lessened but data needed for forecasting will be more elusive and costly.

All too often it is forgotten that Career Education includes career development. Even if the aggregate profile of occupations did not change over a generation, no one could lay down specifications for training successive cohorts of youth for individual working lives of forty years or more. To prepare youth for changing work relationships differs considerably from training them for particular kinds of work even for what today appear to be closely linked sorts of jobs.[46]

In actuality, few manpower specialists have confidence in the manpower forecasts they ostensibly use. Both individuals' preferences among jobs and the computerized projections of requirements are overridden by adjusted and authoritative dicta. A review of what preconceptions about "automation" did to more empirically derived estimates of job requirements a few decades ago should alert one to the need for scrutiny of what purport to be future "manpower requirements."

Achieving a good "fit" between projections of job requirements and of training for those jobs is the essence of comprehensive schemes for Career Education or for any conventional "manpower policy." In some form, a notion of "balance" between trained individuals and their array of jobs is central to such planning. However, a dedendable balance presupposes an explicit analytical link relating demand for labor to the supply of it.[47] Simple data show that the ratio of input of skills (occupations) to outputs varies among economies, even for given industries. Usable schedules of manpower "requirements" just do not emerge, and it is even more difficult to add a link to the argument by prescribing appropriate lines of training.[48]

We read preponderantly about adjusting training to jobs although employers accommodate job specifications to characteristics of available workers--and commonly supplement workers' present capabilities by on-the-job training. School people normally are unfamiliar with these entrepreneurial decisions. Since it is widely assumed that schools are more alterable than job-markets, we read preponderantly about adjusting training to jobs. Yet American economic history long reflected the adaptation of jobs to "low profiles" of skills among the workers for hire. Post-school learning at work is and has been inextricably linked with the dynamics of overall economic development.

Across the gamut of jobs generally I see little evidence for increasing specificity of school training below the tertiary level as the main path toward a better fit between training and the use of it. No doubt as economies become more complex it is increasingly useful to sharpen our identification of skills. But this generalization supplies few priorities for the designer of programs oriented to work, and few clues can be derived as to where or from whom skill is best acquired.[49] To be sure, for a few high-level occupations like medicine schedules of men needed come more by fiat than through a market; that is true also for a handful of crafts. Otherwise strategy for devising appropriate curricula can be worked out without relying upon factitious projections of "needs" for workers.

Looking back in our own history to the periods when demands for labor were more sustained (or so we imagine), perhaps we can infer that the proposed broader aspects of Career Education (relating to "general culture") are little improvement upon the traditional notion of "liberal education." It is curious indeed that the visiting Moseley Commission saw manual training (in 1903) as essential to a *liberal* education. This wisdom seems often to be lacking today in the endemic "vocationalism" and the search for "fit." Controversy about each aspect of this problem of "fit" between jobs and preparation for them will not soon cease. But suppose my judgement is correct that forecasts of numbers for specific occupations typically are wide off the mark. The many questions about pedagogic opportunities and difficulties in preparing youth for the world of jobs and careers need to be re-examined. And this fresh diagnosis should be done not in isolation but in relation to the persisting basic questions about curricula strategy.

Flexibility in skill should predominate over specificity in training as a goal of preparation for work. Flexibly trained (or adaptable) workers can cope better with the always changing and only fuzzily predictable tasks that make up a modern economy.[50] One need not posit that each man will have three (or four or five) segments of careers during a lifetime of work in order to appreciate that "too specific" training is dysfunctional.

It is congenial to concur with Levitan and his coauthors[51] that drilling pupils in particular skills is not the best preparation for employment, let alone careers. This broader viewpoint dispenses with the need to "fit" skills to requirements. Peters' thesis that all education deals with "the general" sounds less causistic if one can accept the foregoing viewpoint.[52]

Employers' demand for "specific" skills typically is less elastic than for general skills. Economic dynamism is facilitated by a preponderance of elastic demand schedules for occupations (and other factors of production).[53] In discussing the Dictionary of Occupational Titles Kelley and associates write[54] of the abilities and other characteristics required "to achieve average successful job performance." Readjustments in an economy, however, are effected mainly by use of deviant workers, especially those in any given line of work who are positively deviant.

What employers call "job turnover" comprises part of what sociologists designate "social mobility" (within or between generations). Doubtless mobile individuals disproportionately possess atypical qualifications in the eyes of employers. If we look at any matrix of schooling-occupation-income (holding constant age, sex, locale, and race), "deviants" comprise a large proportion of workers - and such a tabulation is only a picture at one moment.[55]

Effective utilization of school graduates contributes more to productivity than does fine-tuned training. As one can say generally about the benefits from schools to a society, outcomes depend more on how society makes use of its educated youth than upon wise choice of content in their lessons. This way of looking at the orientation of schooling to lifetime activities is a corollary to the earlier caution about estimation of job requirements. It is another way of saying that the skills of workers reshape the occupations in which they are used. And how they are used calls for at least as much adaptability by employers as by teachers.

Information about labor markets now available in patchwork forms might be called the conspicuously missing element in most present-day schemes designed to prepare youth for employment.[56] This oversight reveals little confidence in pupils' capacity to identify those clues that would be of greatest personal use. Inattention to the place of information in an overall arrangement for Career Education disregards the rule that youth should be taught how to perceive and assess the implications to themselves of their school lessons.[57]

One undercurrent in the present essay that surely is apparent to careful readers is a fear of greater official and authoritative direction of training for work and of job choices. In some degree such tendencies are inherent in any large scale and especially public system of schools and in any elaborate program of instruction about employment. But there are other sources in most contemporary societies for such muting of pupils' sense of autonomy. Many of the strongly authoritative decisions about education are only seemingly based on educational considerations. Yet there is a paradox that in many societies toleration is greater for sexual unconventionality and for "irresponsible" use of automobiles than for giving individuals wide latitude in choice of jobs and training.[58]

I am aware that many arguments used in this discussion will be discounted simply because of the widespread contemporary disdain for "the market," especially among intellectuals. It is overlooked often that market adjustments tend to be corrective of earlier decisions. "Official" decisions, on the other hand, often tend to deny recourse to victims of public actions, to withdraw activities of "public" agencies from scrutiny, or to block countervailing activity. In short, in large measure official actions tend to narrow the scope for individual choice.

Students of educational policy who are discomfited by the enduring inaccuracies of manpower data favor greater investment in the procuring of better data. Probably, however, that task can be carried out only by institutions that also are able to make cogent analyses of more voluminous and more variegated data.[59] But in this connection reference must again be made to the propensity of public agencies (and of quasi-public private organizations) to restrict access to the data. As a halfway step we notice often that while better data are open to private users, public agencies try to confer superior prestige upon the official interpretations.[60]

Conclusions

This paper has two main themes. (1) The roster of jobs into which school pupils will enter cannot be forecasted reliably. Even when the aggregate profile of future employments can be approximated, predictions for individuals - and it is individuals who are instructed in schools and who draw paychecks - will be undependable. (2) "Appropriate preparatory classes" cannot therefore be specified (except for a few occupations) in more than very general terms. Forecasts of needed sorts and number of workers, it follows, cannot be "fitted" to training programs. The changefulness of the world of occupational activities is beyond reach of our quantitative manpower accounting. One major reason - and a reason that emphasizes the interaction between supply of labor and demand for it - is that the effects of evolving capabilities among candidates for work rarely can be specified in advance of when these capabilities are put to actual employment.[61]

Furthermore, translating these economic commonplaces into programs for schools is hindered by the "trained incapacity" that afflicts all occupational specialties, including teachers. We have not learned how to construct an overall view of how different components of a curriculum are interrelated.

Consequently, I have expressed doubt about the usefulness of terms like "manpower requirements," and such notions as "fitting" specialized training of skills to putative job needs of an economy. Instead, I stressed how "occupations" are changed by new entrants and by anticipated supplies of workers. Types of work may (and often do) change also within the timespan of experience and learning of an individual. I urge that "flexibility" of training (and related viewpoints) be emphasized and that the implication of such ideas for curricula should be taken into account.

Non-economists commonly ignore the fact that supplies of labor and demands for a given sort of labor always carry a price tage. The requirements for skills (or for outputs of training) are always schedules of numbers that vary by price in relation to quantity. Moreover, there is substitutability among skills and here also price is an important factor.

We must go beyond thinking in terms of demand and supply schedules or their elasticities of substitution. Over the forty or more years of any individual's working life two broad sorts of changes will occur. (1) There will be life-cycle alterations in vocational learning and in occupational roles; these changes occur in a comparatively static society. (2) As an economy is transformed, there are shifts in aggregate combinations of demands and supplies of human resources. (Thus the cohort pattern of (1) can be altered in successive cohorts). One priority for any scheme of education for careers must be to facilitate continued learning for the inevitable adaptations that will occur in the world of work over the years ahead.

Footnotes

[1] The author has tried to cover representative materials on this large topic. The main gap relates to ongoing evaluations of studies in Experience-Based Career Education.

[2] In the present debate one cannot merely say that education is "a good thing." See John Dewey, The Educational Situation, 1902, pp. 71-2. As a plea that the present essay is not a stubborn defense of general education, I quote a more elegant warning of how difficult it is to find clarity in debates about "useful" education: "The thought of an entire population raised through culture to the morose dignity of an arts faculty is terrifying; and, luckily, pure fancy" (E. Knight, The Objective Society, 1959, p. 105.)

[3] Most comments about the workplace, preparation for it and experience in it, can be matched for matrimony; actually, as Mangum remarks, labor markets on the whole work well (Reorienting Vocational Education, 1968, p. 46.) Nor would judgements about labor institutions be typically more favorable for socialist economies; the cleavage by quality runs along other dimensions. Mangum wisely remarks (Ibid., p. 49) that strictly labor-market relationships neither make nor break an economy although they function more adequately in some countries. However, see E. F. McGowan and D. A. Cohen, "Career Education: Reforming a School Through Work," Public Interest, Winter 1977, pp. 29-31, 45.

[4] R. M. Worthington, Career Education in the United States Today, Flagstaff: Project Baseline, 1974, p. 43.

[5] W. N. Grubb and M. Lazerson, "Rally Round the Workplace: Continuities and Fallacies in Career Education," Harvard Educational Review, 45(4):451-74, 1975.

[6] D. Rogers, "Vocational and Career Education: A Critique and Some New Directions," Teachers College Record 74(4):471-511, 1973.

[7] D. Snedden, The Problem of Vocational Education, 1910, pp. 17-18.

[8] Reports of the Moseley Commission to the United States of America, 1904, pp. 37, 104, 138.

[9] For overall trends see A. B. Mayo, The Concept of Vocational Education in the Thinking of General Educators, 1845-1945, 1946; see citation of F.N.5, pp. 457-8; and A. J. Peters, "The Changing Idea of Technical Education," British Journal of Educational Studies 11(2):142-66, 1963.

[10] See my paper with M. J. Bowman, "Theoretical Considerations in Educational Planning," in D. Adams (Ed.), Educational Planning, 1965 (and reprinted in M. Blaug (Ed.), Yearbook of Education, 1967). A broad typology of training systems is given in P. Drouet, "Economic Criteria Governing the Choice of Vocational Training Systems," International Labor Review 98(3):193-223, 1968.

[11] See my "Education and Society," in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968, pp. 517-25.

[12] Perhaps we should re-examine the postulate that man's manipulative propensity is primary and that his verbal culture is on the whole derivative; Dewey was perhaps too cautious in espousing that viewpoint (see citation of f.n. 2).

[13] H. David, Manpower Plans for a Democratic Society, 1965, p. 82.

[14] T. Husen, "Access to Mass Higher Education," in Perspectives for the Future System of Higher Education, 1977 (Hiroshima), p. 56. My interpretations of Swedish policy are more complex, see "Sweden Re-Examines Higher Education: A Critique of the U-68 Report," Comparative Education 10(3):167-80, 1974 and "Expanding Educational Opportunities: Conceptualization and Measurements," Higher Education 4(4):393-408, 1975.

[15] K. B. Hoyt's six components of Career Education are widely quoted: (1) provision of basic academic skills; (2) basic habits of work [largely embraced in (1)]; (3) work values (which assume that strong systems of values can be taught); (4) knowledge and awareness about the world of jobs; (5) skill in making decisions about career choices; (6) skills in seeking, getting, and holding a job [really included in (5)]. Each of the themes in such a classification has had its individual history. All in all, the blueprint presupposes what I judge to be unobtainable information about supplies and demands of workers and would entail impossible pedagogic or curricular reorganizations.

[16] E. W. Eisner et al., Career Education: The State of the Art and Its Prospects for the Future, 1974, p. I:12.

[17] K. B. Hoyt et al., Career Education and the Elementary School Teacher, 1973.

[18] See my "Social Context of Educational Planning," International Institute of Educational Planning, Fundamentals of Educational Planning, No. 5, 1967.

[19] R. T. Bowles and W. L. Slocum, "Social Characteristics of High School Students Planning to Pursue Post High School Vocational Training," Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 707; and Stephen Heyneman's preparatory document for this conference (at p. 36 of the Winter 1977 version).

[20] Popular lore exaggerates the academic inferiority of vocational pupils, and the proportion of students who later receive some post-secondary training for a job seems to be rather uniform among secondary curricula. The real "dumping ground" for apathetic pupils seems to be the "general" course; though they seem most to need help one suspects they will continue to get lost in the system. The implications of dropouts during high school for this discussion are unclear. We already come close to streaming vocational pupils of good ability in a European model and easily could carry that practice further; close examination of Swedish and German programs would deserve priority. Of course, effects of "career" courses are affected by variations in proportions moving through secondary school and those variations are large between and within societies. See J. T. Grasso, "The Contributions of Vocational Education, Training, and Work Experience to the Early Achievement of Young Men" and other studies in the large investigation directed by Herbert Parnes at Ohio State University (so far available only in processed versions.)

[21] See the citation of f.n. 10 above.

[22] C. J. Schaefer and J. J. Kaufman, New Directions in Vocational Education, 1971, p. 13.

[23] That some pupils learn more and earlier outside the school about the life of work presents sufficiently difficult pedagogic problems without adding entanglements from ideological resentment of this fact.

[24] The "disadvantaged" present special problems relating to both equity and efficiency in any job-oriented programs. Even such courses tend to be at their worst in "slum" districts where presumably they are most needed. Moreover, some spokesmen for labor organizations oppose any vocationalizing of courses. Small schools, rural schools, and traditionally less innovative schools will be less receptive to designs for career education. The seemingly auspicious phrase "development of human resources" does not always foster programs that teach individuals to improve themselves; it is easy to slip into the language of efficiency after beginning to talk of equity.

[25] The beginning of wisdom about counseling is to discern the slipperiness of the following statement (which comes, I believe, from one of the *Europe 2000* publications: "Qualifications hurdles must be done away with; their place should be taken by a guidance and counseling process." Another non-sequitor about counseling was found in the London *Times* (for May 31, 1977): "This country spends less than £10 per teenage head per annum on its careers guidance and employment service for young people, yet it costs the taxpayer more than £10 per week for each young person unemployed."

[26] D. J. Armor, *The American School Counselor*, provides much information about counselors but little about any aspect of counseling that would affect the fit between demand and supply of labor.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 121-4; from his data one infers that few pupils have more than casual contact with counselors.

[28] As I read him, Dewey recommended the first policy. Worthington (citation of f.n. 4, p. 44) points out that even if all pupils receive Career Education, not all teachers in a school (or system) need be involved, but if all teachers are not participating the likelihood of achieving an integrated curriculum diminishes. Today it must be added that efforts to enrich curricula can be frustrated by rules of teachers unions about pay, queuing for preferred positions, job dilution (by use of teacher aids, e.g.), etc.

[29] Dewey's mordant comments (in citation of f.n. 2 at pp. 25-26) about instability of policies on curricula are not outdated.

[30] Many sidelights on the difficulty of harmonizing multiple aims are set forth by S. R. Levitan et al., Human Resources and Labor Markets (2nd ed., 1976), pp. 227-8.

[31] Incidentally, little help on these questions can be obtained from a review of Soviet thinking and practice about polytechnical education, for all of our difficulties have been experienced in the Soviet Union.

[32] To be sure, a youth's good or bad luck on the labor market can be much affected by levels of minimum wages or other factors beyond the reach of schools.

[33] A review and critique of the assumptions of manpower forecasting is given in the first citation of f.n. 10; another excellent treatment is to be found in S. C. Kelley et al., Manpower Forecasting in the United States, 1975.

[34] However: "But when one of the local employers said that what would be really useful would be for the school leavers to be taught Roman numerals from I to XX the (Manpower Services Commission) solemnly added it to the list of skills they put out for research tender" (London Times Educational Supplement, July 1, 1977).

[35] G. L. Mangum, The Emergence of Manpower Policy, 1969, pp. 8-9. Potential flexibility in career education (along with the intellectual rigor that is presupposed by the analyses of economists) risk being swamped by the academic side-effects due to expansion of community colleges.

[36] The literature comparing proprietorial with "public" training schools is expanding rapidly, e.g., William Hyde, The Metropolitan Proprietary School, 1975.

[37] I emphasize the quality of "public" instruction in order to persuade some readers to re-examine prevailing etatist notions about specialized education.

[38] See the citation of f.n. 33.

[39] Discussions around these topics, when they do occur, tend in our day to become submerged in meandering essays about workers and "middle-class," whereas salient contrasts lie within specific occupations, as I see the situation.

[40] J. G. Scoville, Manpower and Occupational Analysis, 1972.

[41] Historical sidelights on these decisions are discussed in Bowman's and my "Education and Economic Modernization in Historical Perspective," which has appeared in a recent symposium edited by Lawrence Stone.

[42] See my "Social Perspectives on the Education Explosion," Yearbook of Education, 1965, ch. 12.

[43] The long series of manpower studies sponsored by the National Research Council testify more to a flexible system than to one suffering from lack of sufficient manpower planning, in my judgement. Whether "recurrent education" will encourage flexibility (other than as part of unemployment policy) remains uncertain, but this is not the occasion for discussion of this topic.

[44] To use a different example, will the level of driver competence be raised more quickly by introducing more school courses on driver education or by using tougher tests to obtain a driving license?

[45] See Kelley et al. cited in f.n. 33. If as my co-discussant states, sizes of job categories change slowly, the task of estimating could disappear; then one needs to decide only for how many specific kinds of job it will be practicable to organize training.

[46] Acknowledgement should be made to the work of Jan Tinbergen demonstrating that purely adjustment lags can exist in a computer-flow that includes full specification of requirements.

[47] See Kelley et al. cited in f.n. 33. Few investigators have looked for data with which to test whether individuals' unguided choices of jobs are as "suitable" as the placements made by the edicts of planners; however, see the work of Richard Freeman. In any event, it is essential to procure follow-up data on where individuals are working after various kinds of preparation.

[48] L. A. Lecht, Priorities for Planning in Vocational Education: Priorities for the 1970's, 1970, of which f.n. 23 and p.x.

[49] The assertion in Kelley et al. (of f.n. 33, p. 66) that today developing countries are outstanding for their manpower planning mistakes the affirmation for the deed.

[50] See the many reports from Ohio State University longitudinal studies of work experience (under the direction of Herbert Parnes).

[51] See citation of f.n. 30, p. 231.

[52] As cited in f.n. 9 above. Substantial job turnover and "wastage" from initial jobs can reasonably be seen as a cost of search and testing, which is the essence of flexibility as T. W. Schultz has for so many years contended.

[53] The Swedish inquiry about higher education posited the opposite and took a short time perspective in recommending many specific training programs combined with limited notions among choices open to students.

[54] Citation of f.n. 33, pp. 99f.

[55] Some reformers propose that vocational life be democratized by rotating workers among high, middle, and low-level (or pleasant and unpleasant) occupations. Whatever the merits of this idea on other grounds, it would not be congruent with the ideas about "fit" in Career Education.

[56] J. H. Fitzgerald, "Career Education: An Error Whose Time Has Come," School Review 82(1):91-105, 1973; see the comments on work habits in McGowan and Cohen as cited above in f.n. 3; the basic work on this topic is by George Stigler.

[57] Again the utility generally would be greater for the low-SES pupils who lack other sources of information (and especially for the more intelligent among them).

[58] Conventional writing about "educational planning" fosters authoritative direction over schooling. Looking back to the schooling of immigrants' children in the United States 75-100 years ago, one wonders if even the most forlorn among them or the most disadvantaged were "pushed around" by educational authorities more than

comparable pupils during the last two decades or so. See my discussion of these authoritative trends in a review of several Europe 2000 reports (London *Times Educational Supplement*, September 5, 1975).

[59] See Kelley et al. (f.n. 33 above at pp. 7-8, 144). Few countries zealously explore their existing data about education (say in relation to occupation and income); even countries famous for innovative policies (as Sweden) make little use of disaggregated data obtainable from census tapes.

[60] None of the imaginable new sorts of data would alter the fact that changes in job structures in dynamic societies reflect supplies of workers as well as demands.

[61] In addition, there are the opportunity costs arising from advising pupils to make unsuitable choices of jobs and from absence of flexibility in labor markets.

Question 3: Collaboration Between Education, Labor and Business - Is There Sufficient Impetus?

The question was stated to the participants as follows:

Can the contention be supported that there exists sufficient interest for employers, workers, and school systems to cooperate or collaborate in the preparation of students for work?

ASSERTIONS ABOUT CAREER EDUCATION

Willard Wirtz

I understand the purpose as being to get away from argument about Career Education cast in such broad conceptual terms that it generates heat quite disproportionate to any light it sheds. The suggested alternative is to identify several of the critical components of the approach to the preparatory stage of life which Career Education typifies, and by discussing the validity and viability of these component elements - which are more readily assessable in rational terms - to test the broader concept.

One such component involves the interest of the established institutions in making the adjustments in conventional procedures that Career Education and related concepts connote. The question posed for consideration includes the implication - properly I think - that these adjustments are to be in the form of new cooperative or collaborative arrangements between "employers, workers, and school systems." Are the interests of these three groups such that their representatives may be expected to collaborate (taking the stronger term) effectively in developing new processes for the "preparation of students for work?"

My answer is that there is significant evidence in both reason and experience for expecting such collaboration.

I will be making, in developing this case for the affirmative, one assumption about the scope of our inquiry which probably warrants clear preliminary identification. This is that we are concerned about both the "education" and the "work" elements of a youth-to-adulthood transitional policy.

If an education/work policy were conceived of as only another educational policy, addressed exclusively to changes in schools' conventional curriculums and the traditional role and approach of teachers, I would both question its significance and have reservations about the likelihood or even the value of any really significant inter-institutional collaboration. With respect to its development and implementation, I understand Career Education as an initiative undertaken to break down the isolationism between education and work, at least so far as young people are concerned - although it need not be limited to the young alone. Such an initiative would be mistaken and abortive, in my judgement, if it were limited to what the schools alone are to do, to changes in curriculums and classroom procedures. This is part of it, but there is a good deal more.

The rest of it has to do with the "work" or "experience" elements in the transition from learning to earning a living. Nor are these limited to building experiential elements into traditional courses of study. The whole career guidance and counseling function is also part of the picture it is proposed to change. So, in my conception of this, is attention to youth work and service opportunities. I don't assume that all young people should finish their formal education before they become full-time employees, and then not come back. It is a mistake to talk about building bridges between the worlds of education and work and then to try to build them from one end alone.

So when the question is posed of whether "employers, workers, and school systems" are going to be interested in collaborating "in the preparation of students for work," that question seems to me properly viewed as covering the development of a broad policy involving all aspects of the school-to-work transition. If "Career Education" connote anything narrower than that, perhaps it would be better to speak of an education/work policy.

The point put in issue will be most directly served by first taking inventory of what evidence there is in experience and what basis in reason for anticipating collaboration from each of the three groups - "employers, workers, and the school systems" - separately, and then drawing some more general conclusions about the basic elements of institutional dynamics involved here.

First, about "employers:" I credit the meaningfulness and significance of the emergence in the past decade or two of the concept of corporate social responsiveness - partly because it is in large part, though not entirely, a concept deriving from a recognition of institutional self-interest.

In sharper focus so far as the career education and broader education/work proposals are concerned, there seems to me every reason to respect and no reason to discount the sincerity of purpose and significance of intent underlying the initiatives taken in this area by such organizations as the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Conference Board, and the Committee for Economic Development.

The Department of Commerce is playing an increasingly significant role in implementing career education and education/work policy. It has more than symbolic significance that the new Secretary of Commerce, before her appointment to that office, chaired the special Education and Work Committee of the American Association of Higher Education.

There is so far only beginning realization of the significance of the corporate development (both unilateral and through collective bargaining) of tuition refund and related kinds of programs. I know so intimately as to make more than mention of it inappropriate the role a number of leading American corporations have played in establishing the National Manpower Institute and directing its efforts toward the establishment of new education/work policies.

It would be a serious mistake to minimize the implications and significance of the variety of undertakings in this area for which corporations and industry associations are responsible: from the "adoption" of high schools, to the setting-up of scholarship programs, to the establishment of a nation-wide distributive education program, to the National Alliance of Businessmen's JOBS program - to mention a few among thousands. Fault any of these. Minimize their significance as individual initiatives. The question is whether there is evidence of "sufficient interest" in the corporate sector. To doubt it is to press legitimate skepticism to the point of conditioned cynicism.

The traditionally recognized corporate or employer self-interest here is in having well-educated young people available for new employment. This means their knowing how to read and write and cipher, and includes their having at least the elements of a marketable skill. There is also a good deal in the idea of new employees' having gotten in one way or another on at least a beginning understanding of what employment means and what it demands.

There is also increasing awareness today of the losses and costs that are incurred by the community as a consequence of casualties at the school-to-work gap. The young men and women leaving school without what it takes to support themselves become liabilities, sometimes permanent. The costs are high to both the individual and the community, and the corporations pay in taxes a substantial proportion of those costs. There is a real interest in the consumer power as well as the "manpower" involved here.

More and more large employing corporations, especially in the manufacturing industries, are hiring fewer and fewer young people under the age of 20 or 21. There is increasing recognition in the corporate community of the need for an education/work policy which will include the development of alternative options for those young people who would, as recently as ten or fifteen years ago, have left high school at 16 or 17 to take unskilled jobs - which machines are now doing.

In the service industries and among small employers on the other hand, there are currently unused opportunities in many communities for more part-time and younger workers. The situation here has been adversely affected by the negative attitudes that have developed about what have come to be called "dead-end jobs." One of the important dimensions of an education/work policy involves the constructive inter-relating of school activities with work opportunities in the service industries. Although the "distributive education" program has been developed primarily so far through cooperation by large retail trade corporations and the schools, there is substantial promise in the working out of arrangements of similar kind involving small retail establishments.

To know the now seven-year history of the Career Education concept is to know that it has been supported fully by the corporate community. If this support has been most visible in the actions of large corporations and trade and industry associations, this is only because they are organized in a manner permitting their larger institutional responsiveness. As the percentage of youth employment in small businesses increases, it will become more and more important to develop collaborative relationships between the schools and these primary employers of younger people.

Now about the interests in cooperation and collaboration here of what the statement of the issue for debate refers to as "workers:"

The apparent decision on the part of the framers of this issue to avoid a reference to labor unions illuminates almost glaringly a critical element in what is in some ways the paradox of organized labor's ambivalence about Career Education.

There has not been and there is not today a representative of organized labor - or, for that matter, any other kind of "worker" representative - on the National Advisory Council for Career Education. So far as I can determine this reflects administrative decisions taken within the

Federal Government; I don't believe the AFL-CIO has ever been asked to name a representative to the Council. I assume, again without knowing, that there is current reconsideration of this matter.

The evidence that would suggest the likelihood of future cooperation or collaboration by organized labor - which is what is critical here - in Career Education or related education/work policies or programs must be reviewed and weighed in the light of the fact that it has been in effect excluded from significant participation in the formative stages of the Career Education program. What has happened at the national level has been paralleled too often by failure at the local level (principally through oversight, arguably but not clearly a lesser offense) to include AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute representatives in attempted collaborative education/work programs.

It would be serious error to even seem to suggest, however, that the factors involved here are limited to institutional slights and reactions to these slights, or that this all started with the Career Education program. There is a long history of uneasy and incomplete relationship between educational institutions and labor organizations, and an even deeper and older question about the extent to which education has or has not been fairly responsive either to individuals' interests as workers or to organized labor's purposes and ideals and processes.

There are also particular elements of education/work policy which raise very real questions so far as organized labor is concerned: about the relationship of cooperative education and work-study programs to adult employment, for example, and about the integrity of the minimum wage laws. The increasingly widespread organization of teachers for representational and collective bargaining purposes has created new relational situations, involving elements of both collaboration and controversy.

This has all been the subject of such extensive and illuminating comment that it is appropriate here only to refer to its recent (December 1976) summarization by Mark Shulman in a study prepared for the National Advisory Council on Career Education. There is included in that study, too, reference to the wide variety of actions taken by various labor organizations regarding Career Education as a specific matter: ranging from its strong endorsement by the United Automobile Workers to the attacks on it by the American Federation of Teachers, with the AFL-CIO taking a generally negative but reserved position in the Platform Proposals presented to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions last year.

It would be a mistake to minimize the implications of the fact that organized labor has reflected a considerable coolness toward the Career Education concept - partly I think because it has not been included in the development of the initiative in this particular form, partly because of a concern about a possible dilution of emphasis on the primary need for more jobs. If the AFL-CIO had embraced the Career Education idea with the enthusiasm the NAM and Chamber of Commerce did, this policy would have been given a critical momentum.

It would be still worse, however, to interpret the unions' coolness regarding this particular initiative as reflecting a disinterestedness or a negativism on the part of organized labor toward either the expansion of educational opportunity or the development of sounder education/work policy. Most students are workers' sons and daughters, and if the unions' most immediate concern is about an intolerable six to seven percent adult unemployment rate this does not mean that there is any disregard of the present and future implications of increasing youth unemployment.

The unions have supported strongly over the years various education/work initiatives. They were prime sponsors of the Vocational Education Act of 1917. The collaboratively developed and administered apprenticeship program is too often overlooked in the consideration of education-to-work transitional processes. In the 1960's, organized labor was the key political force not only in promoting a new manpower training program but in supporting federal legislation that vastly enlarged educational opportunity. Labor union representatives are key members of the boards of many, probably most, community colleges. One of the significant current developments in the education/work policy area is reflected in the growing insistence by numerous unions on the inclusion in collective bargaining agreements of provisions for educational funds of one kind or another.

It seems to me relatively clear, on net, that both as "workers" (in the terms of the debate issue posed) and as labor unions, this constituency in the American society can be expected to collaborate constructively "in the preparation of students for work." That the record on this so far is cloudy seems to me not to reflect anything negative in the institutional genes of organized labor, but rather an incompleteness so far in the efforts to make the unions full partners in this undertaking.

A similarly mixed assessment is necessary with respect to the prospect of "school systems" providing the kind of cooperation and collaboration contemplated by the issue posed for debate.

On the one hand, most of the initiative in "bringing the worlds of education and work closer together" has been school-based, both historically and recently. The land grant colleges were chartered over a centry ago to engage in the teaching of "agricultural and mechanical pursuits." The Vocational Education Act was passed in 1917. Cooperative education has a fifty-year history at the post-secondary level and goes back even further in the secondary schools.

When the family lost or abandoned its key career guidance and counseling role, roughly twenty to thirty years ago, the high schools assumed this responsibility. Community colleges proliferated in the 1960's to become examples of broad-scale accommodation of liberal arts and more occupationally-oriented academic emphases. There has been a parallel development, though with significant differences, of technical and vocational high schools. The whole system of graduate education in the professions is properly included in this inventory.

This National Debate itself is an incident in the emergence of a Career Education concept which reflects the commitment of educational architects and builders such as Sidney Marland and Kenneth Hoyt to the purpose to interrelate learning and earning a living.

There remain, nevertheless, two sets of questions about the extent to which the schools may be expected to "cooperate and collaborate in the preparation of students for work." Any suggestion of larger emphasis on the "vocational" or "career" elements in education prompts almost instinctive reactions to what is taken as the implication that this means less attention to "the basics" and to "liberal arts." There is a traditional reservation, furthermore, about yielding to outsiders - to private economic interests on the one hand or to government on the other - any measure whatsoever of educators' responsibility for determining academic policy.

So far as the balance between "academic" and "career" emphases in education is concerned, I have nothing significant to add to the obvious commentary on what is bound to be - and should be - a never-ending contretemps. Increasing youth unemployment is not, in my view of it, attributable to insufficiently career-oriented education.

I doubt very much whether more vocational or career education, more skill training, would or could affect the youth unemployment figures even a little bit. My strong impression is that so far as most occupations are concerned, and excepting the professions, employers are primarily interested in job applicants having the best possible basic education and are willing to do most of the special skill training as part of the employment. This doesn't conflict with the idea of career education, which I think of as part of basic education rather than special skill development.

It is another question whether teachers and school administrators can be expected to go very far along the line of suggested "collaboration" with other agencies in the community so far as the preparation of young people for work is concerned. If this means anything significant its necessary implication is some measure of sharing of what have traditionally been exclusive institution prerogatives. Collaboration in developing education/work policy means some invasion of turf as far as educators are concerned, which isn't a consideration with respect to the other participants in this contemplated joint enterprise. Bureaucratic inertia is at least as strong a force within the educational establishment as in corporate or government structures.

There seems to me, however, a clearly discernible movement within the educational system today toward finding new forms of collaboration with other community institutions and with the community at large. There is a growing sense that the schools are being charged, by a society which is prone to institutionalize blame for whatever is happening to it, with responsibility for developments beyond the control - at least the exclusive control - of the educational system. These developments range from worsening disciplinary problems in the classroom and declining averages on standardized academic tests to the increasing difficulty college graduates are having in getting jobs that use their education. The schools' problems reflect, more and more, community difficulties. The schools are looking for allies not just in desperation, although this is part of it, but also because it is only through better alliances with the rest of the community that the schools' problems - including those with which they are unfairly charged - can be met.

The 1975 statement, This We Believe, Secondary Schools In A Changing Society, issued by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, seems to me a classic statement of intent to develop new forms of working alliance between the schools and the community at large - without any compromising of academic standards or traditional responsibilities.

We are only beginning to recognize and appreciate the implications of the community college development. It reflects, at least in many of its manifestations, the potential for educational progress that lies in drawing on the force of community as well as on the ideals of learning.

The fairest summary is probably that the schools' responsiveness to efforts at increased cooperation and collaboration in preparing students for work will depend on what form these initiatives take. My own net appraisal, necessarily subjective, is that the "school systems" are prepared not only to collaborate quite fully in responsible education/work initiatives, even to the extent of giving up or at least sharing previously recognized responsibilities, and that they will probably play the leadership role in such collaboration.

An institution-by-institution inventory of interests in collaborative effort remains, however, meaningless in itself. The real questions implicit in the issue posed for debate go beyond this. Are the separately identified sets of interests compatible? If they are, will a joint undertaking to promote them be significantly effective? Will there be any costs involved which will have to be counted against the values? And how, if the answers to these other questions are encouraging, is this all to be brought about?

Because these questions carry beyond the assignment in this particular debate, they are appropriately noted only briefly. Yet the Case for the Affirmative would be hollow if its implications were disregarded.

I think these various sets of institutional interests are comptaible, that a collaborative effort to serve them will be effective, and that there will be a clear value gain - at no cost in loss of other values if care is taken - from such an undertaking.

This takes us back to the opening suggestion of the assumptions underlying this presentation and argument: that what is required today (in "the preparation of students for work") includes a virtual reconstruction of the traditional pattern of options, opportunities and obligations - affecting both "education" and "work" - for the school-to-employment youth-to-adulthood, transition period in people's lives. If this goes beyond the concept of Career Education, it clearly includes it.

I think we are about through what may well prove to have been the roughest passage in course toward what some of us call Career Education and others Education/Work Policy. This was the passage attended by the illusion, to which we may have contributed, that what was being proposed was a cure-all for youth unemployment and underemployment in the form of a shifting emphasis in education from liberal arts to a stronger emphasis on occupational training of one kind or another.

That wasn't and isn't the proposal so far as education is concerned, and if it were it wouldn't meet the present and prospectively worsening problems - which are related but separate problems - of unemployed and underemployed youth.

The case for collaborative effort - involving in my view of it participation by the educational system, employers, labor unions, and also representatives of the community at large - depends on the validity of the identification of a series of needs here (without getting hung-up on definitional problems) and the establishment of the proposition that these needs can be better met by these institutions working together than by their working separately.

There is time and occasion here only for the briefest suggestions of the types of needs which seem to me involved here: for the revisions in educational curricula encompassed by the Career Education concept; for adequate career counseling and guidance programs; and for procedures for facilitating young people's moving back and forth between formal education and experiential learning.

There is need, equally, for new initiatives at the local community level to identify whatever are the available opportunities for young people, especially in the service industries and among small employers, and what arrangements can be worked out collaboratively between schools and employers to make maximum use of these opportunities.

The need probably goes beyond this to include the necessity to develop new concepts of community apprenticeships and internships - perhaps involving, to some extent, uses of funds available under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, with the prospect of additional possibilities opening up under the Youth Employment and Development Project Act of 1977.

These are only suggestive references. I confess a feeling of confusion about the attempted isolation of the implementation issue identified in this particular debate from the broader issues of the substance of Career Education and education/work policy which must be left for others.

I conclude with specific but only passing reference to the example of cooperation and collaboration in this area developing in the Community Work-Education Council Consortium, and in the parallel programs being administered by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and the National Alliance of Businessmen. In most of the 33 communities included in these projects there is today *in fact* the cooperation and collaboration we seem to be debating as an abstraction.

I don't believe there is much question about either the interest of employers, labor unions (workers) and school systems in collaborating in the preparation of students for work, or their readiness and ability to proceed along these lines. The critical question is rather about the degree of realization by "the public" of the part *it* must play - at national, state, and local levels - in the new pluralism which is in fact already developing in this country, especially in the education/work area and particularly at the local community level. This is up to all of us.

CAREER EDUCATION: A SOLUTION TO WHOSE PROBLEM?

David K. Cohen

This essay is an exploration of what is presented as "the implementation question." The issue which seemed critical to the implementation of Career Education programs was whether there was "sufficient interest" on the part of various institutions and persons - workers, employers and school systems were mentioned - to permit collaboration or cooperation in programs which prepared students for work. This is a somewhat puzzling formulation, for while "interest" is certainly an important condition for the success of any program, it is hardly the only element important to implementation. One also thinks of social need, sound program design, appropriate means for delivery, and the context in which the program is to occur. There is also the "target group" - is it in sympathy with the program, does the program speak to its perceived needs and desires? Focusing simply on interest is a potentially limited way of thinking about the implementation of career education programs.

Certainly the issue does not occur in a vacuum. There is no need to return to GO, collect all the evidence, and advance painfully to The Conclusion. We already know quite a bit about the implementation of career education programs (at least those sponsored by the Office of Education), and this information suggests several conclusions about their implementation. None of them are particularly encouraging about the extent to which the programs' goals will be achieved. Naturally, the USOE programs now in existence are not the last word on education and work. NIE has sponsored some quite different and very interesting efforts, and the National Manpower Institute is just now in the early stages of efforts to establish community consortia which will work collaboratively at "smoothing the transition" between education and work. Thus the problems of existing programs are not conclusive - there are other and perhaps better programs.

This point is particularly important, for the discussions of these papers revealed that Mr. Wirtz, at least, is also interested in a somewhat different problem than career education. If I understood the views he expressed, the problem is continuing structural unemployment or underemployment for youth who are finished with high school but not yet in their middle or late twenties. He and others view this pattern as a serious and persistent feature of the economy now, and are seeking to devise what might be termed a "curriculum for work" to meet it. The community consortia now being arranged by the National Manpower Institute are, in effect, an effort to provide some work experience, some education, and something to do for what Mr. Writz thinks is a large and growing segment of the labor force - the youthful late adolescent and young adult unemployed. Career education in schools, he said, could help with this problem, but all the career education in the world couldn't solve it: for the problem occurs after high school is over when work doesn't materialize.

There is room for a good deal of argument about how new, how serious, and how persistent his problem may be. And there is room for plenty of disagreement over whether it can be solved even if it is serious and persistent. Mr. Wirtz's view, presented at the debate, is that business and labor would enthusiastically support programs to provide work and education for youth in this category - even though there were no real jobs for them - because if such experience was not provided, serious social and political problems could ensue. In effect, Mr. Wirtz believes that it is the prospect of potentially serious social trouble which will encourage management and labor to behave in ways apparently contrary to their economic self-interest.

This may or may not be the case. But whichever way those issues are decided, clearly they are not central to career education as it has been understood to-date - programs operated for youth before the school leaving age, in schools. Thus, despite the different and lively interests which underly Mr. Wirtz's current work, this essay will deal with career education in schools. It seems wise to begin by considering existing evidence on implementation - specifically on the role which the "interest" of workers, employers and school systems has played in programs aimed at improving the connection between school and work.

Existing Program Implementation

The implementation of USOE-sponsored career education programs throws some light on the extent to which these efforts have met the original aims: teaching youth more about work; providing a more rational basis for decisions about work; and improving the transition from school to work. The programs were originally premised on the notion - as Willard Wirtz wrote several years ago - that unless there was an equal partnership between schools and employers career education would not work well.[1] And at the local level Mr. Wirtz's forecast appears to have been mostly borne out. Equal partnership of schools and business is quite rare - sufficiently so that it is hard to find even a few examples of it. And program implementation seems to be quite weak. Eleanor Farrar and I surveyed the scene and concluded that equal partnership was a phenomenon celebrated more in its absence than its realization. This information came to us from the USOE administrators responsible for the programs, and as Dr. Farrar and I reported in a recent essay in *The Public Interest*, the idea seems to have been quite amiably given up. One USOE official put it nicely: "No one talks about equal partnership anymore."[2]

This retreat seems to have been accompanied by similar strategic withdrawals in program content. Career education was initially conceived - in one of those cloudbursts of wordy enthusiasm which often accompany the birth of new Federal programs - as an endeavor which would permeate the entire school curriculum. New materials would teach students more effectively about the world of work, and there would be real experience in work settings. The first was imagined to be a way in which to relieve the unholy drudgery of academic subjects by introducing curriculum based on the real world beyond the schools' walls; the second was thought to be a way or providing, as they said at the time, "hands-on" experience with work of all sorts.

The difficulties in weaving materials on the world of work into established curricula on math, or literature, or, perhaps the sciences can easily be imagined. These have been chronicled, and the wounds licked publicly, by Office of Education staff responsible for the programs. It turns out that work is rather an imprecise idea, and that when applied to the precise or at least highly organized curricula and materials used in schools, the application doesn't take. As Dr. Farrar and I noted, plans for infusing information about work and careers into students' learning ran smack into rising hostility to all carpeting on the curriculum: Americans who were backing into basics in the mid-1970's saw this as just another way of watering down an already rather thinned-out intellectual brew. That reinforced the feelings of discipline-oriented teachers in high schools, and their views seem to persist.

USOE officials acknowledge this in several ways. Some come right out and say that they can't figure out how to solve the problem - that infusing career education into the curriculum seems rather like infusing water into oil. Others take a more euphemistic approach - they argue that career education is the best way to teach the basics, and propose that teachers get more release time so that they can study career education.[3] I will pass on the first point, since career education was initially advertised as a way to save kids from the boredom of basics. But the second is too engaging to let pass without notice. Arguing for more release time for teachers now - when schools face severe fiscal problems - is rather like suggesting to residents of Miami worried about an oncoming hurricane that they all face east and blow like hell.

Indeed, all the evidence suggests that USOE career education programs have for the most part become just the sort of thing which USOE administrators didn't want them to be - namely, what Dr. Kenneth Hoyt termed "add-ons." He didn't like the idea because it suggests that career education is external to the core curriculum. But add-ons are not necessarily insubstantial. A good deal of money has gone into career education curriculum, among other things because that is something that educators and related industries know how to produce.

> For example, Project Discovery [is] a career-education program developed by the Iowa State Department of Education. . . Ray Morley, a consultant to the program, says, 'Project Discovery is designed to get students actually doing things.' This 'hands-on career-education effort' consists of packaged materials and instructions for different kinds of work. Over the past four years, Iowa has spent over $1 million developing 20 'career kits' that, according to promotional material, are designed to 'permit students to experiment with many characteristics of work in the 'safe' environment of the school lab or classroom.' These self-instructional packages are currently available for commercial art, hairstyling, advertising, auto-body repair, plumbing, greenhouse work, and medical patient care, among others. The masonry kit, for example, includes a mortar box, wire, a patio-block form, and a line level - along with instructions on how to use them. The school provides trowels, bricks, and concrete blocks - all that any mason needs. This is a far cry from students working side-by-side with a mason, but Ray Morley reports that career-kit sales are brisk, at $2,550 for a set of 20. The producers of Project Discovery plan to develop 60 additional career kits.[4]

Thus, like many other education reforms, career education programs at USOE have undergone a crucial transformation. From structural change in the learning process, in the content of education, and in the context of schooling, they have become curriculum packages. These video tapes and job simulations testify to the continuing ingenuity of those who manufacture what is called curricula, but it seems to bear a weak resemblance to what career educators originally said they had in mind.

The same fate seems to have befallen efforts to enlist business partnership in teaching students about work and the world in which it occurs. Originally the idea was that students would actually experience a variety of work settings, thus helping them to understand what it was all about and adding information which would inform choices about both school and the jobs it was supposed to lead to. In most cases it appears that these experiences simply have not materialized. But in those where students do get out of school, the result resembles nothing so much as that tried-and-true staple of the educational diet, the occasional field trip. The best examples of school-business collaboration to which career educators point turn out in nearly every case to be plant tours, lectures in plants, movies about work in school-like rooms near workplaces, and so on. In these cases there is an increase in the numbers of students leaving schools for these brief forays, but the chief effect of it all seems to have been an added scheduling burden on the schools and businesses. None of the administrators seemed to think these trips were much of an improvement - they spoke of them mostly as just the same old thing under a new name.[5]

The extent of implementation in most USOE career education programs, then, seems not to set a winning standard. Perhaps it makes sense to conclude with an assessment made by Kenneth Hoyt, who has led USOE's efforts in this area for several years. In a recent essay Dr. Hoyt noted the findings of a national evaluation: career education, it said, had made little progress in secondary schools - it was more successful in the elementary grades (which, one notes with interest, are rather far from the world of work). Hoyt also wrote that the chief problem facing career education was increasing its comprehensiveness. This, he said, seemed essential because the same evaluation had apparently found that "comprehensive" career education programs were occurring in only three percent of the districts with career education. This is not exactly a pennant-winning record. Hoyt went on to say:

> When one realizes that what [the evaluation] described as "comprehensive" was really far from what we would like to see, the seriousness of the problem becomes more apparent.[6]

Sidney Marland could not have put it more succinctly.

Why Implementation Has Been Weak

Reciting this unhappy record may seem impolite, but in exploring the reasons for implementation problems it helps to have a sense of how the land lies. It also can help focus attention on the reasons why implementation has been so problematic. And this in turn can help us answer the question posed for the essay - namely, whether the parties at interest can collaborate or cooperate to train students for work.

Reasons here come in layers. One set has to do with the ordinary internal organization of schools, business, and other places of employment. Schools are places in which people have fairly settled routines. Teachers have generally impossible amounts of work to do - or impossible if one imagines serious education to be a chief part of the job definition - and one way they manage this is to organize their work in ways that are reasonably predictable. Classwork is predictable, in part because spontaneity six times a day with as many as several hundred children would tax even St. Francis. School organization is predictable, in part because without it the mere management of all those students - many in the unruly spasms of adolescence - would be next to impossible. Of course there are lots of other reasons for this routine, including the passions of central administrators and the history of formal education. But even without these considerations, the structure of schools is quite enough to explain it.

Another reason is that schools also are places which have long been thought best if secluded. This owes something to the fact that in many cases they used to offer a somewhat better environment than children had elsewhere, and in another part it is due to the ancient association between serious learning and places of quiet. But in the U. S. the relative seclusion owes a good deal to other factors. One is the long-standing notion that school provided a preparation for work which required freedom from distractions in the rest of society - most especially the demands made on children by work or other pressures of economic circumstance. School was not just a preparation but a refuge. The other reason for the schools' somewhat secluded stance is that they are public institutions in an active democracy, a democracy obsessed with education. As public institutions staffed with low-status professionals they have traditionally been terribly vulnerable to public and private pressures of all sorts - from parents, interest groups, politicians, and so on. In an effort to secure some relative tranquility in the midst of these pressures - tranquility for which lawyers and doctors need weaker institutional barriers, because their professional status is so relatively high - school professionals have tried to remove the institution somewhat from the centers of public action and opinion.

One can see from all this how problematic a seemingly simple thing - making partnerships with other private and public enterprises - would be for schools. It would take time that wasn't there; it would require a new role definition for teachers; it would require an end to seclusion; and it would suggest in dozens of concrete ways all the threats and problems from which schools have tried to distance themselves. It is thus hardly a surprise that schoolpeople have not been entirely forthcoming in response to the cheers and urgings of the new Federal programs. For the programs imply organization and action which reduce their painfully modest autonomy, and shift the precarious roles of their professional inhabitants.

Businesses and other places of employment are not ordinarily trapped in such tender relationships with their environment, but their operations and organization also shed some light on the fate of existing career education programs. Amid recent chatter about public responsibility - it has waxed and waned periodically since the Progressive Era - businesses perversely pursue profit. Study of their operations in the last twenty years suggests that they do not do this with the rapacity, rationality and total dedication once imagined to be the case. Often, it seems, they pursue it with caution, routine, even sluggishness. But whether in boring caution, grey flannel rationality or flamboyant ferocity, businesses try to make money. They also advertise in various ways, and try to maintain good community relations. But there is no evidence that chatter about social responsibility has produced a widespread sense that business ought to actually take much responsibility for anything in the social service department. Often, indeed, they take their responsibility to be keeping such services in check through lobbying efforts. Almost uniformly they consider taxes to be their chief contribution in this department. Thus, in response to a set of feasibility studies of career education partnership undertaken a few years ago in four different regions of the country, businesses almost uniformly reported that they neither thought they had specific educational responsibilities nor were they willing to take them on - even for pay. That, they declared, was the schools' business.

Thus, most work organizations would think it unseemly to take on major educational responsibilities. A few have, but many more have located responsibility for career education in their departments of public or community relations - the departments of plant tours, good will, and low-cost locution. But most firms do nothing. And it should come as no surprise that the business organizations which have taken the most visible role in career education are precisely those national and multinational concerns whose visibility in the economy and the polity have move them toward a more prominent role in the national liberal culture. The same seems to be true for labor - i.e., the only major union for which real concern and active interest is claimed is the UAW. The leaders of these organizations have tried to lend a hand with job programs, some national executives even have struggled with welfare, and recently some have been enlisted in the cause of a smoother Transition for Youth. But just as the social ideas of Henry Ford have not much penetrated to his plant managers or dealers - they don't even seem to have reached his foundation - so the career education participation of national corporate relations executives had little effect out in the branches. Given the economic and social structure of American business, there is no particular reason to think there will be much movement in the other direction. As one slightly despondent USOE official put it: "If you assume rational behavior, the investment just isn't worth the cost to business."[7]

These two brief excursions suggest some of the reasons why the "interest" referred to in the mandate for this essay would on the whole be low in both schools and workplaces. There are, of course, a few others. One is the rather high unemployment rate current in the nation, a rate which suggests more pressing social and economic needs than career education. That unemployment rate, though, is also a decent rough indicator that in many sectors of the society there is not the demand for workers which might create some interest among employers in improving the preparation of youth for work. A second reason is what one might politely characterize as the reserved attitude of organized labor. At best they regard such programs as a sort of harmless palliative, an activity which bears roughly the same relationship to work as pablum does to whole oats. But mostly organized labor does not regard these programs at best - instead they see them either as a threat to jobs already held by organized workers or as an effort to increase the pool of unorganized labor.

But these don't entirely explain why "interest" has thus far not been great enough to fan career education into a great blaze of educational enthusiasm. It helps, in this connection, to consider the thing be implemented. The nature of the program or policy, after all, is of critical importance: imagine the implementation problems which the Community Action Program would have avoided if it had been the Community Revenue Sharing Program instead.

In the case of career education, the problems do not seem to lie principally in its creation of local political firestorms. Rather, the problem seems to be just the reverse. With a few exceptions there is a lack of strong feelings about it; the idea has not taken hold strongly in high schools, where one would expect career concerns to be greater; and with the exception of a couple of academic essays, career education seems not even to have inspired much debate. Mostly it seems to have inspired the sort of bureaucratic heavy breathing which accompanies most Federal programs. If controversy is a measure of a program's potential importance, there is less here than meets the eye.

The Problem Is The Policy

The chief reason for this, I suspect, is that career education represents an effort to solve a problem whose nature is terribly unclear. As a result one can gain neither a sense of the correct direction for change nor much momentum. The very definition of this problem is so curious that it tends to inhibit the emergence of "interest" which would lead anywhere. The chief problem with implementation, then, is not the obstacles out in the world - though they are hardly trivial - but the confusions inherent in the conceptions of this particular social problem.

It is easiest to see this in the terms of reference used by program advocates. Modern society, they write, has become complex: it requires "bigness and specialization." These developments open "wide gaps" in society, gaps between parents and schools, between schools and community, between work and learning.[8] Now these notions are as old as modern society itself: the French nobility was decrying the very same developments half a century before the Revolution. The events following 1789 sadly diminished their number, but where the sword had fallen literature and social science took up the pen. Thus we find Mr. Wirtz arguing in a recent publication that:

> . . . what is ticking away is our ability to retain our humanity in the face of a tremendous loss of community.[9]

According to its chroniclers this loss of community is manifest in any number of ways, but career education enthusiasts focus on what they take to be two particularly dangerous developments. First, as the PSAC report on Youth in Transition made out, there is the "youth culture," a phenomenon which walls adolescents off in a world all their own. Due to the decline of family and community, it is said, modern youth grow up locked in their own culture; in the report's view this seemed to be dominated by loud music, radical and insurgent political ideas, a market which caters to youth, and a widespread hostility to adults. Cut-off from contact from the real adult worlds of life and work, youth were portrayed as in danger of growing up unsocialized - or rather, socialized to youthful values rather than to adult ones.

The second dangerous development has been nicely put by Mr. Wirtz - it concerns the schools' isolation from the rest of society, and their alleged consequent inability to teach:

> Schools that become isolated from the rest of the community become isolated from the knowledge of what it takes for youth to participate in those other institutions. . .[10]

Schools that are cut-off from society cannot teach students what they need to know about work; they cannot provide contact with adults that will pierce the hermetic seal of the youth culture; they cannot provide healthy socializing influences in place of the adversarial mentality of the youth culture; and they can't help youth either to find jobs or to figure out what they want to find. As a result of this isolation, youth often founder upon leaving school - they cannot make the "transition to adulthood."

This is a big diagnosis - I am slightly in awe of the ability with which social scientists and men of affairs can get it down, as it were, in one gulp. But swallow it they do, and then move on. With James Coleman and other connoiseurs of decline, Mr. Wirtz briskly declares that the problem must be brought to hand: "We can't just drift along." He goes on to sketch in the scope of remedy with an admirable succinctness:

> If community as we used to know it - where the successful coming of age seemed ageless - is not again obtainable, then we have to invent its modern equivalents.[11]

The invention of these modern equivalents, then, is the business of career education, and of such other efforts as the Community Education-Work Councils which the National Manpower Institute presently is engaged in organizing. The agenda for these reforms - again I have difficulty swallowing - is nothing less than inventing institutions and arrangements which will make up for the "tremendous loss of community" which has occurred in the last several centuries.

Now there are two sorts of problems with this. First, is it true? Has there been the loss of community described here? Or if there has, has it produced the social pathology and dislocation described in recent reports? Second, assuming arguendo that it is true, why in heaven's name would we expect career education or Community-Education Collaboratives to be the answer? The problems in clearly answering these questions - and the great confusions which underlie them - contribute much to the absence of that "interest" which might produce implementation.

On the first point, one can hardly argue that the world has not changed in the last several centuries, nor that there has not been profound dislocation. But has the change been good or bad, disruptive or liberating? Moderns, after all, have told themselves two very different stories about what has happened in the last few hundred years. One is the story of equality and progress, in which we have thrown off the limited and oppressive conditions of often depressed and restrictive rural villages and always oppressive factories, and by dint of great political and social struggle created a wider and fairer world, a world in which movement is freer, horizons broader, opportunities greater and the choices of ordinary people far more varied and ample. It is a story in which the obliteration of invidious inherited personal distinctions characteristic of old-style communities allowed the creation of a more free, equal and open society.

The other story, by contrast, is one of lost communities and fallen families. It is a story of a happy society long ago, where family and community, work and learning, labor and leisure were woven into a seamless web. But in the view of James Coleman, Mr. Wirtz and the French nobility before them, large-scale commercial ventures, urbanization and associated social forces slowly tore the fabric of this other time, creating "great gaps" of social dislocation and personal alienation. From such stuff was the isolated youth culture - and the personal alienation and anger of its members - to be made.

Americans have told themselves these stories - sometimes alternating and often at the same time - for time out of mind. The New England Colonists had hardly gotten off the boats before they began bemoaning the disobedience of youth, the incipient decay of the family, and the need for strict controls and formal institutions - they called them schools - to stem the tide. The same stories were told throughout the eighteenth century, and by the nineteenth they contributed to the creation of what was rapidly to become a nationwide system of public schools. But the creation of those schools also was tied closely to the other story - of how education would rescue ordinary working Americans from the economic and political oppression of the pre-Jacksonian class structure. Thus, if schools were inspired in part by the persistent sense that community seams were coming unstrung and needed to be stitched up again, they also were inspired in part by the notion that only through education could ordinary Americans gain the information, power, and status needed to undo the bad old community.

Which version are we to believe? The question is impossible, but juxtaposing the two is a useful jolt: if community has been lost, is it something we really want to find again? Or are we caught in a powerful and recurrent myth about peace, beauty and integration in the Old Eden. This is certainly a story which has gripped Western culture for time out of mind. And if we can put two such different interpretations on the same history, why choose loss? In the case of Career Education, the reasons lay mostly in the state of things in the late sixties - when an unusual upsurge of youthful political insurgency and artistic activity came on the heels of Civil Rights and anti-war agitation. It rocked the adult culture back on its heels. That was also the time of disorder in the high schools, drugs on middle-class streetcorners, and the big bad news of that older Colemen report, about how schools didn't make a difference. As a result the same thing happened as has happened in earlier periods of concern about unruliness and disorganization: the disorder recalled that old story about loss, a story manifest in both the literary and social science ideas everyone learns in school. It is thus a favorite way of explaining social troubles. The story about lost communities seemed to fit the phenomena in the last 1960's, as it has seemed to fit intermittently since the seventeenth century. But this may have more to do with our passion for the story than with the evidence.

A few points may illustrate just how elusive that evidence can be. A typical assertion about the need for new institutional arrangements to repair loss is that:

> . . . the need for collaboration and cooperation [among schools, business, etc.] is particularly acute in achieving the integration of the young into adult society, for the life of a teenager is whole and cannot be fragfragmented (emphasis added).[12]

I can report, after dutifully ransacking the extant literature on the psychology and sociology of adolescence, that there seems to be little support for this idea. Whatever fragmentation means, there appears to be little evidence that researchers find it problematic. Indeed, there are many adolescents presently in high school whose lives seem to be "fragmented" but who find the experience stimulating. They work part-time, they have after-school activities, do their school work, and even seem to have a social life. Sometimes they play sports. Others are "fragmented" in a different way - they do pretty nearly only one of the above - but they seem no less healthy. Similarly, several recent studies seem to show that other sorts of "fragmentation," like dropping out of college (which only yesterday produced the sort of horrors which Mr. Wirtz refers to), produces both "fragmentation" in the lives of late adolescents and especially a very unsmooth transition to work. But the researchers think it is a healthy feature of the students' personal development and school work. In addition, I have been unable to figure out what it means to say that "the life of a teenager needs to be whole." There is a good deal of evidence that adolescence is a time of unwholeness and "jerky" development. These things were until recently regarded as normal. There is a good deal of diffuseness, unfocused behavior and uncertainty, and quite a distinct ambivalence about adult values and authority in adolescence. But until the paroxysms of unease which seized adult social scientists and public officials in the late sixties, students of adolescence thought these things were to be expected. One wonders why they are suddenly evidence of pathology.

The contrast between these new cries about adolescent fragmentation and the actual evidence is useful. For it reminds us that a certain amount of what presently seems to be troublesome - personal uncertainty, resistance to authority, vocational unclarity and even hopping around from job to job - may simply be the expected concomitants of a society in which youth have much more freedom than they used to. There certainly is some evidence that these behavioral attributes and attitudes were not particularly manifest in late fifteenth century Europe, and it seems reasonable to think that one of the reasons they exist now is because society has created what we call adolescence: a time of transition, of uncertain responsibility, of personal development, and of relative freedom from the cares of adulthood. There are, one hardly needs to mention, powerful economic and social forces which reinforce the existence of this period - including an already oversupplied labor market and a social value system which places enormous worth on self-development, personal exploration and playful behavior in the young.

The existence of adolescence thus means that the "transition to adulthood" occurs later than it did four centuries ago. And it means that the transition is accompanied by more anxiety, personal problems, and changes of course. But these come with more freedom. What evidence is there that this is bad? What criterion of orderly personal progress tells us that adolescents should move "smoothly" from school to work? What sense of rationality, or evidence, or experience tells us that young people can be taught things in school which will have a major impact on their job choices? What is the evidence that there is a major problem here? The chief problem I can find is the Modern World: periodically adults decide it is a mistake, and that one chief indicator of this is that the young are going to hell in a handbasket. But an equally strong case can be made that the young are only doing the things to be expected in this society; what reason is there to see this as evidence of social pathology?

This should be enough to suggest just how difficult it would be to make out a strong empirical case for a policy of "smoothing the transition" for youth. The evidence is very mixed at best, and as a recent RAND volume suggested much of it runs across the grain of Youth in Transition. Thus, while we could explore the issue for months, most of the differences would not be empirical, and even if they were, the evidence is mostly too weak to decide them - much less make a convincing case for this policy. If the policy has appeal, it has more to do with convictions about the state of modern society than with persuasive evidence on social problems.

There is, however, another way to approach the issue. Social science is often in a state of serious confusion; the mere fact that evidence is unclear has rarely been a serious obstacle to thought, much less action. We might, therefore, agree to forget social science for a moment, and forget as well our hesitations about the policy. We might in fact agree that "smoothing the transition" is a good policy, that the problems it is designed to solve are serious, and that we want to implement it. And then ask one question - what reason is there to believe that the policy will solve the problems?

Answering this query requires a look at four concerns: the strength of labor markets, evidence on the viability of institutional arrangements for smoothing the transition; and evidence on the efficacy of new institutional - as opposed to old - arrangements for executing the policy. I am doubtful on all three points, and it may be useful to briefly explain why.

The first point is the simplest: without employer demand which is strongly pulling new workers into the workforce, there may be no real economic incentives for employers to participate in some effort to better prepare youth for work. For - all questions about the effectiveness of such efforts aside for the moment - given a strong demand for new workers, programs like career education or community-work collaboratives may strike employers as helpful devices for either improving their access to labor markets, improving the quality of labor they have access to, or improving their ability to train or select from worker pools. Thus, employers might support such policy if there were not substantial oversupply of qualified workers seeking employment. But in an economy with America's present level of unemployment, there is unlikely to be the aggregate level of demand for labor which would generate employer interest uniformly throughout the economy. Of course it may be the reverse in some sectors or in some regions. But even assuming that, it implies not a national policy but a series of fragmentary or local efforts. That may not be a bad thing, but then the "interest" of the business community would be less strongly economic than it might be, and the motivational slack to support business interest in a national policy might have to be taken up by social concerns. These can be powerful, as recent social movements suggest, but the most powerful social interests of American business generally have been in keeping down social welfare expenditures.

A second point concerns the requirements for managing any effort at transition smoothing. Implementing a policy of this sort requires quite a diverse array of resources:

mechanisms for channeling youth among a variety of institutions; the invention or adaptation of training for (or about) work; mechanisms for creating institutional linkages among institutions usually not linked at all - schools, business, other local government agencies, etc.; and the money to support all this. There is no way to predict how well such arrangements would work, but one can point to the relevant issues and the results of past experience. Concerning mechanisms for channeling youth among various institutions, we know only that this is both a new enterprise and that such channeling mechanisms have mostly been private and informal. Job placement in the U. S. has been managed largely through either markets or informal personal networks. We have little experience in designing formal organizations to acquaint youth with work, to help convey them from school to work, or to get them from one job to another.

On the question of training there is a bit more experience, but it seems ambiguous. Various War on Poverty programs sponsored by OEO and DOL have recently aimed at training youth for jobs. Admittedly the "target population" here was more narrow and perhaps more problematic than the one envisioned by career education. And admittedly there was a somewhat different ambition - that is, specific training in both school and job skills. But this means that these programs had clearer and less broad objectives than the policies we are exploring. Nonetheless, their results have been anything but clear. Evaluations reveal very mixed and at best weak effects on program outcomes - like basic skills, getting a job, and income. These are certainly much more concrete targets for action than those suggested by a policy of "smoothing the transition" to work. If it has been hard to design and implement effective training programs aimed at relatively clear program goals, why think it would be possible to develop effective programs for much less clear program goals?

Another resource required for this policy is effective links among those institutions presently unlinked: schools, other local governments, businesses, social service agencies, regional offices of federal agencies, and the like. Interagency cooperation and collaboration is, of course, one of the best-filled graveyards for appealing ideas. The interagency task force, the panel of agency delegates, the community-wide committee with representatives of various agencies - these organizational coffins contain the remains of ideas which had just enough support to cause

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something to happen, but not enough support to cause it to work. It may be worth noting, in this connection, that there is little evidence of much spontaneous collaborative activity in response to various career education programs, something which might be taken as an indication of the degree of "interest" already existing. A more serious point is that while bureaucratic mechanisms to link institutions can be created, many examples from other areas of social policy suggest it is much harder to make them work. Existing agencies are simply the official aspect of large, enormously complex and well-established social service sectors. These sectors are closely linked to established professions; bureaucratic and political territory, and to ways of seeing the world. As a result, securing cooperation or collaboration requires more than just desire, interest, or programmatic concern: it requires also social and political forces which can counter-balance the power of existing arrangements. Strong economic pressure on employers to find new or better workers might help to create such forces, but there is no evidence that such pressures exist.

The last resource is money. Ironically, there is less to say about it. Clearly it would be required, and equally clearly there is less of it for social programs now than there once was. But if it does materialize, either through career education legislation or statutes supporting community collaboratives, one thing should be borne in mind. Money is a necessary but not sufficient condition of success in endeavors like this. Absent other knowledge, skills, and resources - as many Great Society programs revealed - no amount of money can create the training, the institutional linkages, or the interest among employers which this new policy would require.

A third way of exploring a policy of "smoothing the transition" is to ask whether there are better ways of accomplishing that goal than creating new institutional arrangements. In that connection, for example, one might argue that this policy, like most social welfare policies, would work only for those who desired the service in question. Youth who didn't care to have a smoother transition, or who didn't feel that this transition was a serious issue in their lives might not be the best candidates for any career education program - no matter how innovative or interesting. If that is plausible, then might it not be simpler to just improve those existing arrangements which allow students to make or explore the transition themselves? The arrangements now available include work-study programs, cooperative education programs, the National Institute of Education's EBCE program, part-time work, competency-based high school certification, and dropping-out of high school. Absent any evidence to the contrary - such as, for example, survey research which showed a much larger demand for work experience or transition smoothing among high school students than presently exist - one might argue that existing arrangements were sufficient to meet existing needs. Certainly it is striking that in all the arguments for this new policy, there has been no evidence either from the experience of youth with existing programs or from their attitudes, ideas and expectations concerning school and work. Instead, inferences have been made from the youth culture, or the loss of community, to the need for new programs. Given the great leaps these inferences require, it might be prudent to learn something from programs already in existence - and from the ideas and attitudes of adolescents - before beginning efforts to create new programs and institutions. If past experience is any guide, there would be a few surprises.

Conclusion

This essay has examined a rather large question: whether there is reason to believe that the implementation of career education programs can expected to succeed. It has examined this issue in terms posed in this debate - namely, whether sufficient "interest" exists to create the required collaborative or cooperative relationships among employers, workers, schools and students. I have suggested a generally negative answer, for several reasons. First, existing implementation has been weak, and there is a good deal of evidence that "interest" in many career education programs is sufficient only to promote the most superficial sort of cooperation. Second, I have argued that there are good reasons - having to do with the structure of schools, the character of business, and the nature of existing labor markets - why such superficial cooperation has been forthcoming. Third, I have argued that a more serious obstacle to implementation may be the fuzzy and questionable definition of the problem. That is, many Career Education programs may be weakly implemented because the problem is weakly conceived. The problem may be our ambivalence about being modern, not a distinct social pathology with clear causes and definable remedies. Finally, I suggested that even if we ignore all this and accept the views of those who advocate a policy of smoothing the transition to work, there are deep problems. One is that the economic conditions which may be required to implement the policy may not exist. A second is that the various resources required to implement the policy - training, the creation of new social channels and networks, the incentives for interorganizational relations, and money - seem in rather doubtful supply. And a third is the utter absense of any direct evidence that new arrangements would be preferable to, or more effective than, existing programs which permit experience with or exploration of work.

All of this suggests two things. One is that the "interest" and other conditions required to support successful implementation of career education programs may not exist on the broad scale required for major national programs to succeed. The other is that this condition may be less the result of the obstinacy of the social world than of the ambiguous and uncertain status of the "problem" career education is designed to solve.

But this does not mean that career education programs will fail, nor that these programs may not be useful and constructive. For one thing, even if everything I have said is correct - something which seems doubtful - there will be plenty of local exceptions. And more important, some career education programs seem to respond to real needs and problems - albeit not always those intended. The programs may, for example, offer more of the same opportunities as can be found already in work-study or cooperative education programs; they may create alternatives to existing high school programs which are too dull, too overenrolled or too demanding for many students; they may provide opportunities for more individual attention than existing high school classes; and they may create the politically useful sense that schools are "doing something" about a problem that presently bothers adults - making schools more relevant to work and more useful. Career education may well be a good thing, then, because it attacks real problems in American high schools.* Even if it doesn't help much in "smoothing the transition" to work, it may help with some of the difficulties with this curious and problematic institution.

*I am grateful to Dr. Eleanor Farrar for these ideas.

Footnotes

[1] Eleanor Farrar McGowan and David Cohen, "Career Education - Reforming School Through Work," The Public Interest, No. 46, Winter 1977, p. 35. This discussion of USOE programs is based on interviews with USOE officials; they were asked to generalize about career education programs sponsored by that agency, and this analysis can thus be taken as representative of these officials' views of the USOE programs.

[2] Op. cit., p. 37

[3] Kenneth Hoyt, "Redefining the Career Education Concept," Monographs on Career Education, U. S. Office of Education, nd., p. 35.

[4] McGowan and Cohen op. cit., p. 42.

[5] Op. cit., pp. 34-37.

[6] Hoyt, op. cit., p. 38

[7] McGowan and Cohen, op. cit., p. 37

[8] Willard Wirtz, "Collaboration in Smoothing the Transition Between Education and Work," The Work-Education Exchange, Vol. I, No. 1, January-February 1977, p. 1

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Steven Heynemann

Question 1: Will the individual exercise of free choice of career direction result in occupational choices that are consistent with the preferences of relevant social units (for example: parents of compulsory-age children, minority group communities, etc.)?

Fear of tracking is today a universal phenomenon. Expressions of this fear in the U. S., however, are somewhat unique because of the particular history of education. "Tracking" it must be remembered, has a very different history in Western Europe. There, where children were separated into either a college-preparatory or a terminal institution soon after primary school, the process of tracking has been considerably more blatant, and proposals for its solution considerably more uniform. There, because children from manual labor families have been grossly under-represented in college-preparatory institutions, the political objective of labor parties has been to eliminate tracking by eliminating institutional specialization.

Like their European counterparts, American children from manual labor families are also under-represented in universities, in spite of the fact that the comprehensive school is native to the United States. And since under-represented American groups are as worried as their counterparts elsewhere, the discussion has been heated; but because American tracking, by and large, is not the result of specialized terminal institutions, the arguments are more diffuse and more likely to concentrate upon process by which a child chooses a curriculum. Since the match between child and curriculum occurs within schools, educators are inevitably under suspicion. Therefore any proposal which claims to assist students in sharpening their career decision-making skills can be expected to raise an additional alarm - irrespective of the program's actual content, or its effect.

The notion of free will is at the heart of the debate over who should choose what a child should prepare for. Nevertheless, because it involves career orientations of children, contained within this debate is the spectre of equal representation at high levels of training and all of its political implications. Within this question lies the fear and suspicion of all groups who are under-represented; groups which, despite the denials of career educators claiming they have no intention of tracking, still fear the results of free choice of career direction will exacerbate, or at the very least, will not ameliorate, what is already prevalent. Exploring the question of whether it is right for the child to choose his own curriculum therefore, is hardly an esoteric exercise.

The Degree of Adult Intervention: When and How Much

In the course of the debate, Schrag admitted that no child can be entirely educated without some form of adult intervention - some expression of preferences from "relevant social units," however defined. Children are, for example, asked to learn to read - though some may prefer to play kickball. Fallers, of course, agreed. Choice is meaningless, she said, unless it is "informed," and no one can choose for himself until there is a self to choose for. The trick, said Schrag (and Fallers might concur) is to distinguish between choices which are "informed" from those which are not, and then to honor those which are.

Thus they agreed that "the child's self" has its limitations, and that no child can, much less ought, to choose a career orientation until prepared and informed. But three questions remained unresolved: (1) when competence, however defined, is present; (2) how one is to tell when it's there; and (3) whether occupational preference is appropriate for the school to discuss. Schrag would have us, and presumably Career Educators, operate on the principle that a child's occupational preference represents a child's need to know. He felt this could occur at a very early age and whether it was realistic (as a career option) is not of significant importance. It is perfectly understandable if a child of seven wants to be a dinosaur hunter; in fact one might use this "preference" to teach him about evolution. Thus this "naturalistic" model of pedagogy would imply that the career exploration element in Career Education is legitimate - even when used at primary school age levels.

Fallers disagreed. This "exploration element" has nothing to do with "careers" she said. It may be justified on the basis of service to others, on the basis of "working together," or in acquiring basic knowledge about what a postman does, but if this exploratory element is explained as being relevant to a child's personal career, it would be "destructive."

In sum, there was an understanding on at least one level, that adult intervention is a necessity in the educational process. When applied to occupations both Schrag and Fallers would have us use occupational preferences for pedagogical reasons. But Schrag would have the school avoid passing judgement on the reality of occupational preferences, and Fallers would ask that the school avoid trying to relate a child's occupational preference to a child's "career."

Too Much Choice or Too Little Choice

Our society, said Schrag, is neither primitive (e.g., operating on a basis of consensus) nor totalitarian. Informed choice, therefore, must be made by the individual, and if the debate question has any meaning, it must be answered affirmatively. If the individual is not allowed to choose for himself, how do we know which social unit is the one most relevant to choose on his behalf; how do we know which spokesmen are legitimate; or whether their interests are consistent with those of rival units, or even internally consistent. Parents are not free of miscalculation or prejudice; and if the child is forced to delay choosing a career direction in concordance with the desires of "relevant social units," there is certainly no guarantee that their choices would be any less stultifying than if, when informed, children had made it for themselves.

Said Fallers in reply: "There is a sense in which many of our young people are being destroyed, or at least traumatized by the great number of choices they are constantly asked to make." In fact, she implies, some children are given such a latitude of choice that they are apt to forget that there are units larger than themselves. Furthermore the whole process of thinking about a career forces children into "self-analysis" before they have a mature self to analyze; it exacerbates an already pronounced tendency toward self-centeredness; it ignores the pressing need to have children delay their own personal satisfactions for the common good, and it creates confusion and disorientation by creating an illusion of action when in fact, during adolescence, little is possible legally to act on. It is because we are an open society that it is morally right that we ask that our young people not make any choice of career direction until they grow in skill and maturity. Nor, she says, when a child is in need of career direction, should that direction come from the school. This is not a function legitimate to the school. The principal task of the school is to teach those skills which are basic to economic survival, and to insure the transference of a "common culture." That is all.

In the course of the debate one questioner asked Mrs. Fallers how she would respond to parents who demand that schools teach the skills necessary for their children to find employment. To this Fallers replied that the schools do teach employment skills by teaching responsibility, basic knowledge of science, math, history, language, and service to others. Furthermore, she insisted that professional educators should negotiate with parents but, as professionals, should never allow themselves to be placed in a position of having to claim more economic potency on the part of schools than parents should have reason to expect. This is damaging to all concerned: educators, children, parents, and undermines confidence in what schools are really supposed to do.

If Fallers is correct, then children already have too many choices, and would be damaged if given more of them. Thus, she argues, Career Education should not be taught in schools. If Schrag is correct, then the philosophy of Career Education, that which lays emphasis on having the individual make an informed choice, is the appropriate approach for schools in a society which bases its ethos on the individual as rational actor.

Occupational Status Differentiation and How To Treat It: The Tracking Connection

Schrag can see no more reason to force a Black child to attend college than to prevent a Black child from attending college. It is not that he sees all jobs as being equally rewarding, it's just that if a child wishes to be a mechanic, which does not require a college background, the child should not be forced by some "relevant social unit" into postponing that choice. To Schrag therefore, the school should act as an instrument to effect what is preferred by the individual; if vocations do differ in value, then salaries or taxes should be restructured to make them equivalent. But there is, he said, no difference between what a doctor or a gravedigger does which makes one inherently more valuable (to society or the individual) than the other.

Fallers disagreed sharply. "It is an insult to children," she said, "to pretend that they can be taught that all jobs are equally prestigious." Status differentiation is normal to every society and is learned in ways so subtle and in arenas so well beyond the efficacy of the classroom, that the school should not attempt to overcome that which it cannot even influence. The challenge of the school, she says, is not to teach that all careers have equal value; the challenge of the school is to teach children that respecting people in different occupations is required of all citizens.

Because Career Education remains absolutely neutral with respect to the prestige value of occupations, it would parallel Schrag's view. Career educators might ask that a student think carefully about some occupational characteristics: responsibility over others, working conditions, length of preparation, specialization of required skills and the like. To each characteristic would be a value assessed by the individual child: some like working outside, others do not, etc. But no characteristic is discussed which contains a value to be assessed by any unit larger than the individual.

Fallers opposes this. She does not ask that schools teach children that doctors or poets are more worthy, as humans, than are gravediggers. But she does ask that the school act as an instrument of a unit larger than the individual; that the school not ignore what is true in all societies, that both poetry and medical science, for example, are universally acknowledged to have more challenging and worthy roles to play in the function of society than do some others, functions which require complicated pre-employment training. This does not imply that Paulo Ramirez has to be a poet. It does imply that the function which is charged to the school by the wider scoiety is to see that during his period of non-adulthood, Paulo Ramirez study enough language before he becomes an adult (and can choose for himself) so that he will never be prevented from becoming a poet.

Which Social Unit Is Relevant?

Schrag is on strong ground when he points to the complexity of social units and asks how one is to determine which is relevant. Each individual belongs to a multitude (family, church, sex, race, class, etc.); and none is entirely consistent. Were the unit to choose the career direction the result, he implied, would be less social harmony, not more; and more stifling and more authoritarian schools, not less.

The philosophy of career education holds that each child should choose his own career direction, and will do it better if informed. This is supported by Schrag's arguments. Not only is this principle morally proper, given our society's legal principles, but given the plethora of contradictory social units claiming relevancy to a child, having each child choose for himself is simply utilitarian.

Fallers did not deny the diversity of relevant social units. It does give one pause, she says, to confront "names like Marie Rodriquez, David Stein, Alma Olson, George Fujikami and Ali Musa" in the same classroom. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is no common wisdom on which the schools should be required to concentrate. Among secondary school students, basic skills are common, as [illegible] statistics, science, art and language, etc.; but also common are the principles of moral action, national political history, economics, criticism, and experiencing responsibility. Specifics do differ - what book in what school, etc. But the essence of Fallers' reply to Schrag lies in a curricular direction which she claimed is consistent with the interests of all "relevant social units," regardless of how diffuse.

What Fallers seems to offer is a way in which schools can provide an education in the interests of all social units simultaneously. Her suggestion implies that what a child prepares for not be left to the child's choice, irrespective of interest or ability. Her core curricular direction is offered as being the basic minimum knowledge necessary for the young to pass from adolescence into adulthood. She implies that this is the basic requirement of the society as a whole, and should not be subject to a child's veto. In her view, compulsory schooling should not include a choice of occupational specialization.

Fallers' suggestion would indeed prevent the closing of options until adulthood. As a philosophy, however, it may run counter to an adolescent's belief that he has had enough English and not enough physical education. Nevertheless, it would lessen the curriculum diversification fears of ethnic minorities, manual labor organizations and others, whose principal objection to Career Education is that the child has not had enough English and should, therefore, not be allowed to decide.

Question 2: Is the future of occupations sufficiently predictable that the provision through formal schooling of job-entry vocational skills is to be preferred to NO provision of such skills during formal schooling?

Most important to emerge from this debate were the fundamental disagreements over the nature of the evidence. So pronounced were the differences in opinion that in the summary one side characterized the other by saying that "nearly every one of the key terms in the statement he made is indefinable, an indeterminable entity, and therefore, one cannot found policy on it;" while the other side characterized the difference between them as being linked to the opponents' representing the University of Chicago - an institution "famous for its belief in non-intervention." This was, to say the least, a good debate. It was also the most technical of the debate's questions.

Mangum began by presenting a list of occupational titles and the number of workers in the labor force with those titles in 1950, 1960, 1970, and wherever possible, 1985. From this list he concluded that the level of demand for most occupations does not alter radically over time, proving therefore that it was possible to predict the kinds and amounts of occupational training which would be needed in the future.

Anderson argued that Mangum's data were irrelevant. "The fact," he said, "that the census shows that occupations, over the decennia, are stable or unstable, has nothing to do with career education. Career education refers to schools. Mostly. And the question of whether what goes on in schools has affected these decennial trends, is an entirely different question which was jumped." Knowing the number of people in a given occupation, he said, gives us no indication of the kind of skill training necessary to perform productively since the skills requirements *within* occupations have been known to change rapidly. Furthermore, the number of people in a given occupation does not simply reflect demand, it also reflects supply - artificial (e.g., state-controlled) and otherwise - and bears little relevance to which skills school systems should provide, especially at the pre-tertiary level. Moreover, Anderson suggested, using census occupational data for extrapolating or for projecting "manpower requirements" can involve circular reasoning. Not only do past or existing occupational levels not presuppose future "requirements" (aspirations, perhaps), but any numerical level of the occupational employment is aggregated to a point frequently inapplicable to individual decision-making - most people move and the more local the employment data the more susceptible to unpredicted fluctuations. Even if we could agree on how to decide which skills might be required of an occupation, Anderson asks, could we then all agree on which skills would be necessary for productivity over an individual's whole working lifetime, say for the next forty years or more?

Mangum responded to this by reminding his audience that the purpose of having schools provide specific skills, whether for international economics or for plumbing, is to provide entry-level skills only. Schools can be held accountable to no more than that and the wording of the debate question confines itself to entry-level skills in particular. Of course, he said, the number employed in a given occupation does reflect supply as well as demand - but isn't it legitimate to include a supply (however accounted for) in one's prediction? It is true, he admitted, that the number in a given occupation is not synonymous with the skills required for that occupation, and it is also true that because local conditions alter more quickly (new pipelines, a major industry closing, etc.) choosing which skills to provide is more problematic if it is based on local data. Nevertheless nationally the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has had about an 85% success rate of occupational prediction; we know that technological change (excluding fads such as hula hoop production) takes at least ten years to generate; we can predict changes in demand of say, teachers, well ahead of time - if anyone would listen - and when it comes down to it, to plan, even with its known inadequacies, is better than not to plan.

With respect to specific skill training in schools, Mangum contended that vocational curricula have changed very little over the decades and tend to concentrate only in those few skills which are among the most involatile: clerical skills, health, automotive, welding, drafting and the like. He admitted, however, that vocational educators have been "burned" on occasion by providing skills in less dependable arenas; that specific skill training (like everything else done in schools) does indeed have opportunity costs; and that schools (more frequently than he "would like to think about") provide vocational skills for jobs which don't require them - and though perhaps justified if the student needs remedial help - it can hardly be justified on more economic grounds.

Anderson, for his part, admitted that there were "a few" occupations which had skill requirements sufficiently predictable to justify "preparatory classes." But were these classes up to the public to provide? He raised the issue of proprietary schools and suggested that it was fallacious to assume that they were less successful as providers of skills than the much-touted training programs in the general secondary schools and junior colleges. Specific skill training at the pre-tertiary level has, says Anderson, never been any insurance against "frivolous" job choices; and if one were to look closely at labor market data one would find that, by and large, the most innovative and productive individuals are those whose training was, by all agreement, "deviant" from the norm. Look at what employers want, Anderson argued, to be sure, they want employees with entry-level skills, especially when taxpayers are willing to pay for them. But most want individuals whose preparation would lead to more adaptability, not less. In sum, he said, the "employer's demand for specific skills" typically is "less elastic than for general skills."

A question from the audience referred to the Congressional Record which had indicated that when voting on Career Education legislation, Congressmen were commonly under the impression that the program was going to develop saleable skills and reduce youth unemployment. Since both debaters had pointed out the importance of economic demand independent of an educational training, was the impression of these legislators correct?

This elicited four comments, first one from Mangum and the next day, in reaction to Mangum, from Anderson, Cohen and Wirtz. Mangum said:

> "on this, like many other things, [legislators] have a very inexact understanding of what these relationships were. . . [but] I don't see that as their real role. Their role is to kind of absorb a sort of feeling of the directions that we ought to go. . . and I think this [Career Education] is a way that will make a marginal improvement and like some of the people that Professor Anderson was with at his school, I think we all operate on the margin."

To this, Cohen, the next day, responded as follows:

> "If indeed the Federal legislature is voting for these programs on grounds which the sponsors of the programs themselves believe not to be valid, then we have a serious problem if that program gets passed, because Congress has then done something which the executive branch does not believe it can accomplish."

Anderson, after implying that Career Education could not accomplish anything identifiable, said that:

> ". . . the literature so far on Career Education does not make a case for spending a dime beyond what will evolve anyway in good schools with alert teachers under present systems."

And to this, Wirtz responded:

"Have you read H. R. Seven, Dr. Anderson: Do you know the specifics of it? Because my answer would be that there is a sufficient identification of a specific list of things, not vague, but quite specifically spelled out, which do warrant the investment of that much money to test their broader validity and viability."

Comment: At the second session Mangum pointed out that training in specific skills should not be considered synonymous with Career Education. Although there were career educators who "include occupational skill training as one of the many components of career education," the program, he said, included a wide array of goals independent of specific skill training.

The distinction was agreed upon. Vocational education was not taken to be synonymous with career education. Nevertheless career education embraced the provision of specific skills through schools. It was this element, and this particular element alone, to which this session of the debate was dedicated. As Wirtz said, "the problem [of Career Education] is broken down into its component elements which does permit the rational discussion of the viability and validity of the concepts on which those particular elements proved and thereby approach a reasoned judgement as to the pros and cons of career education."

This session discussed a question on which there is a voluminous literature and a plethora of experience. To sum up the result, one would have to say this: that Mangum successfully defended the proposition that "occupations" have changed less than we would have thought, given the technological revolutions since 1950. But he did not succeed in establishing a clear link between the lack of change in the number employed across the spectrum of occupations, and the provision of occupationally specific skills in pre-tertiary public schools. On that, the debate will continue.

Question 3: Does there exist sufficient interest for employers, workers and school systems to cooperate or collaborate in the preparation of students for work?

Of the three, this topic elicited the most succinct debate. The question had been raised earlier in printed form, and because of this presentations had been generating over a longer period of time and were about as clearly focused as would be possible. Though disagreement was pronounced, there were a few areas of genuine consensus - some of which were no small surprise, to audience and participants alike.

Collaboration Of The Business Community

Cohen claimed that the participation of the business community in career education is confined generally to those "national and multi-national concerns whose visibility in the polity have moved them toward a more prominent role in the liberal culture." Other firms have expressed interest, of course, but their activities are concentrated in their public relations departments where students, when invited, often end up spending their time learning about the business in a room, very much resembling a classroom, located near to the firm's headquarters. He claimed furthermore that the Office of Education and career education administrators know of this lack of business willingness to participate (even if offered pay or profit) and if their names are withheld for protection, individuals will admit it. In fact, one such official was quoted by Cohen as saying that "if you assume rational behavior the investment just isn't worth the cost in business."

Wirtz disagreed. The National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Committee for Economic Development are all examples of organizations which, he claimed, have expressed real interest and a willingness to participate. The new Secretary of Commerce is interested, furthermore, said Wirtz in his rebuttal:

> "You [Cohen] cast off with a gay, reckless abandon any suggestion that there has been evidence of collaborativeness. . . and I appreciate your reference to the Education-Work Consortiums, because they do permit us to go into the evidence. . . and [as stated in the formal presentation] there has been an extraordinary degree of cooperation from the corporate community through the institutes to the development of a new Education and Work program."

The Effect Of Unemployment

Said Cohen: The business of business is profit. And business cannot profit if it focuses its talents on education. Therefore as the price of skills becomes cheaper, i.e., as unemployment rises, the tendency for business to collaborate, already low, will be less. Wirtz claimed the opposite. As unemployment rises, he felt that the sense of social "crisis" will also rise. If this occurred, then businesses would collaborate with educational authorities more, not less. In an atmosphere of social crisis they would see more clearly that in the long-run collaboration would be in their own self-interest.

The Effect Of Underemployment

Wirtz says that underemployment is a serious problem, particularly with college graduates. Cohen is not as certain (neither is Anderson). What is taken for underemployment, e.g., the "over"-educated's tendency to move among service industry employers before entering the manufacturing or other sectors, may in fact be normal labor market search behavior, and less serious as a problem than we have supposed.

The Collaboration Of Labor

In labor's view, says Cohen, career education bears about as much relevance to work as "pablum does to whole oats;" a program whose rhetoric (despite the Federal bureaucratic "heavy breathing") was hardly worthy of any sizeable commitment of time or resources. Labor's principal interest, says Cohen, is to see that any assistance to youth outside the classroom does not in effect supply work which could be performed by union labor.

To an extent Wirtz agreed. Unions, he said, have not played a large role in career education policy-making; they are indeed interested in protecting union jobs (principally by protecting the concept of a single minimum wage), and their participation can be described as mixed at best. Strong career education endorsement has come from the United Auto Workers, but attacks on it have come from the American Federation of Teachers, with the AFL-CIO being "generally negative but reserved." However, this is changing, he said, and union participants can be expected to increase in the future.

The Collaboration Of Schools

Additional consensus was found on this subject, for both participants argued that the collaborative role of schools and school systems has been equivocal, at best. As Wirtz put it:

> "any item-by-item inventorying of evidence bearing on the prospect of educators' 'cooperation and collaboration' in new education/work policy or program proposals is of little value. There are unquestionably special forces of institutional protectionalism and inertia working here; and the concern about compromising education's broader purposes and ideals is obviously legitimate, though I think not well-founded."

Could school systems be expected to collaborate in the future? Here differences emerged. As was true in the case of employers, Wirtz felt they eventually would, and for the same reasons. He felt that schools were under tremendous public pressure to deliver a marketable student (irrespective of the economy's health), and because of this pressure they badly needed political allies. The reason why schools would team up with labor and business organizations, he said, is not unlike Lewis Carroll's story of the butcher and the beaver: "The night grew darker and darker and the valley grew narrower and narrower, until only from nervousness, not from good will, they marched along, shoulder to shoulder."

Cohen disagreed. Collaboration of school systems, he felt, depends upon the collaboration of school teachers, and school teachers "have generally impossible amounts of work to do." To add one more function - a career function - to everything else which is currently expected of them can simply not be fit in logistically. Furthermore, part of the strength of the American ethos for school systems rests upon the community's demand that school be isolated from the more debilitating elements in a community; a belief that the school should offer an environment, albeit temporary, "somewhat better than children had elsewhere." For these reasons, Cohen argued that the "collaboration" of schools will remain somewhat problematic. Not only are school teachers already pushed to the limit of their functions, but there is a community consensus that schools, to one extent or another, be separate and secluded from other environments.

Smoothing The Transition To Adulthood

No subject emerged where opinion was more divided. Wirtz strongly felt that there was a "disjuncture" in becoming an adult today; that this "disjuncture" exists in other industrial societies; that as a phenomenon it is relatively recent, serious, and that it requires immediate intervention. At stake, one feels from his description, is the re-assertion of some notion of "community."

Cohen has thought about the psychological origins of social policy and places this particular belief of Wirtz's alongside several others which, he said, stemmed from a "sense of loss." He sees Wirtz, Coleman, Bronfenbrenner and others as actors whose refrain is typical of the last century of social policy liturgy. He sees them, not as prophets, but as "connoisseurs of decline," men whose beliefs (in adolescent "fragmentation" or "age-segregation") were based more on their own ambivalence over modernity than on the strength of empirical evidence to show that new habits had negatively affected a generation. There is no concurrence over whether age-segregation or fragmentation (part-time work, part-time school, etc.) is good or bad, Cohen said, or on how the word "community" can be defined, on whether the school should be more closely connected to the world of work - or more protected from it; or on whether the process of transition to adulthood is worse, or in fact better than it once was. With this, Cohen in effect argued that the original premise of and the original reason for collaboration in education and work - that there exists a "disjuncture" worthy of intervention - rests on very shaky grounds.

What Are We Talking About: Career Education Or Post-Compulsory-School Activity?

Late in the debate Cohen came to the conclusion that he and Wirtz had been discussing different problems. Cohen had been confining his remarks to Career Education's activity in schools. Wirtz, though aware of Career Education's in-school strategies, seemed to address himself to a different component of education and work, the component which concentrates upon individuals who have left school and who have not yet settled into a career, individuals generally between 16 and 25. Perhaps because he was thinking about out-of-school youth, Wirtz rejected any notion of there being an equal level of collaboration between schools and employers. Employers, he felt, should have a very small role to play with respect to school curriculum and teaching strategy.

For Cohen, the fact that Wirtz was emphasizing out-of-school youth as the target group for Career Education was no small discovery. "It is interesting," he said, "that we've been talking about two different things," and that "Mr. Wirtz is interested in a somewhat different problem than career education," namely, "the structural unemployment or underemployment for youth who are finished with high school. . ."

Wirtz allowed that schools had been overburdened with unrealistic expectations and that in fact their principal task was and will always be their broad educational mission. Furthermore he conceded that his personal interest centered on the problem of youth who had already left schools. Nevertheless he also tried to defend the use of career education in schools and put it this way:

> "Part of the reason you and I have trouble getting on the same wave length is that I think of career education only as part of this broader part. But when you ask me do I think that there are two components and that we've been talking. . . only about the education end of it, I think we ought to talk about the work end of it, too."

The Utility Of Foreign Experience In Education and Work

Both participants were asked whether the experience of other countries might be applicable to American education and work strategies. In short, both said no - though for different reasons. Cohen admitted that there were societies in which the relationship between school and occupation was closer than in this country. But to imitate their strategy, he said, presumes agreement on the moral principle that it should be close; that children know what occupation to prepare for while still in school; and that the amount of changing back and forth after a decision is made, should be small. Not many Americans would entirely accept the implications of these assumptions as being the ethos of the schools. Wirtz, on the other hand, rejected the lessons of foreign experience because universally included in other countries seemed to be an increment of central administrative authority - also something he felt antithetical to an American solution.

In response to Wirtz's rejection of more central authority, Cohen asked Wirtz how his suggestions for new institutions for out-of-school youth could be implemented without sizeable new resources; and whether it would be likely to find new resources without new Federal responsibilities. Wirtz responded by saying that large amounts of money would indeed be necessary, but that this could be found on a basis of "present cost transfer." Responded Cohen to that: "Well, as a former Secretary of Labor, you know better than all of us how hard it is to reallocate existing costs." Replied Wirtz: "It is terribly hard."

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